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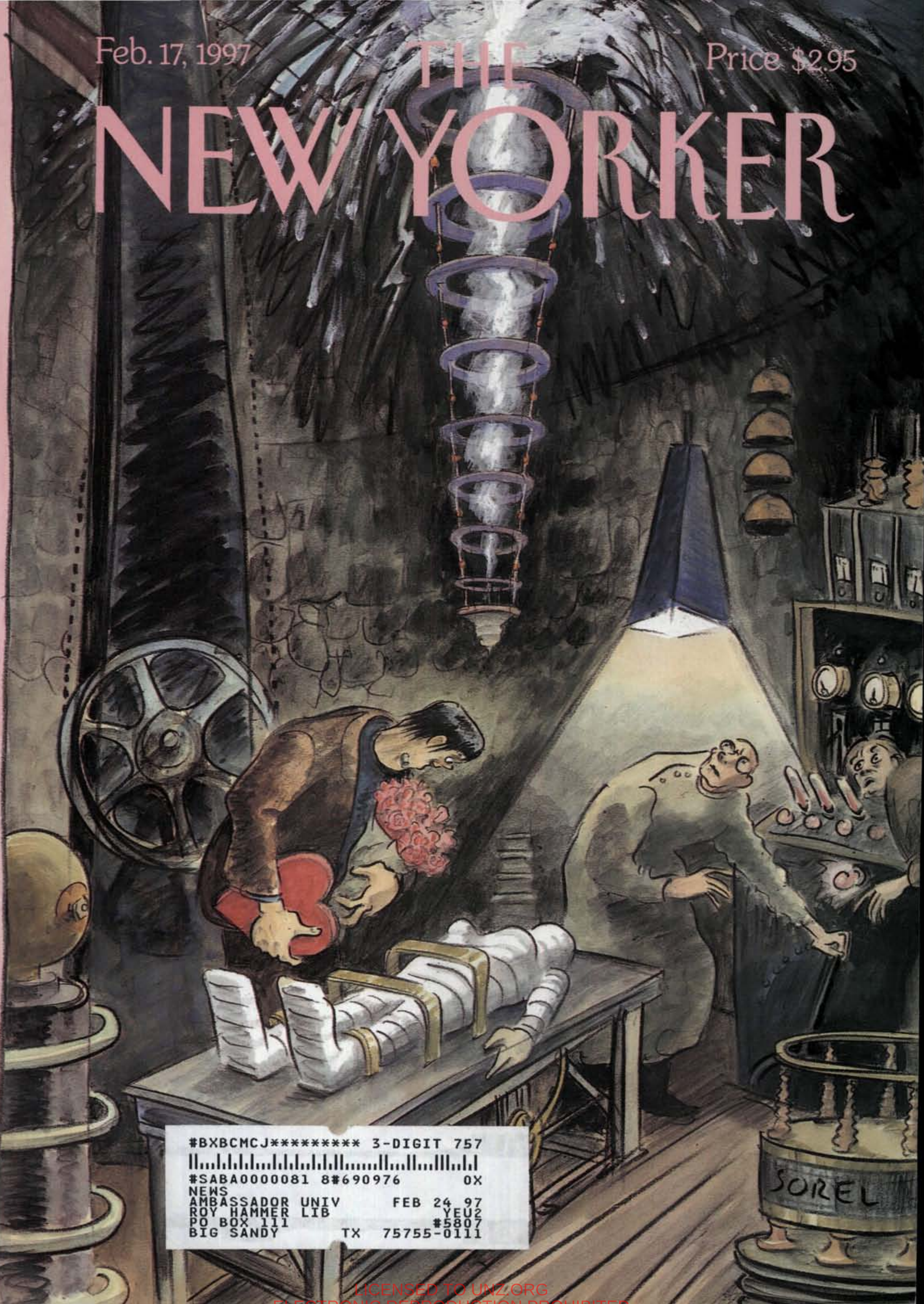

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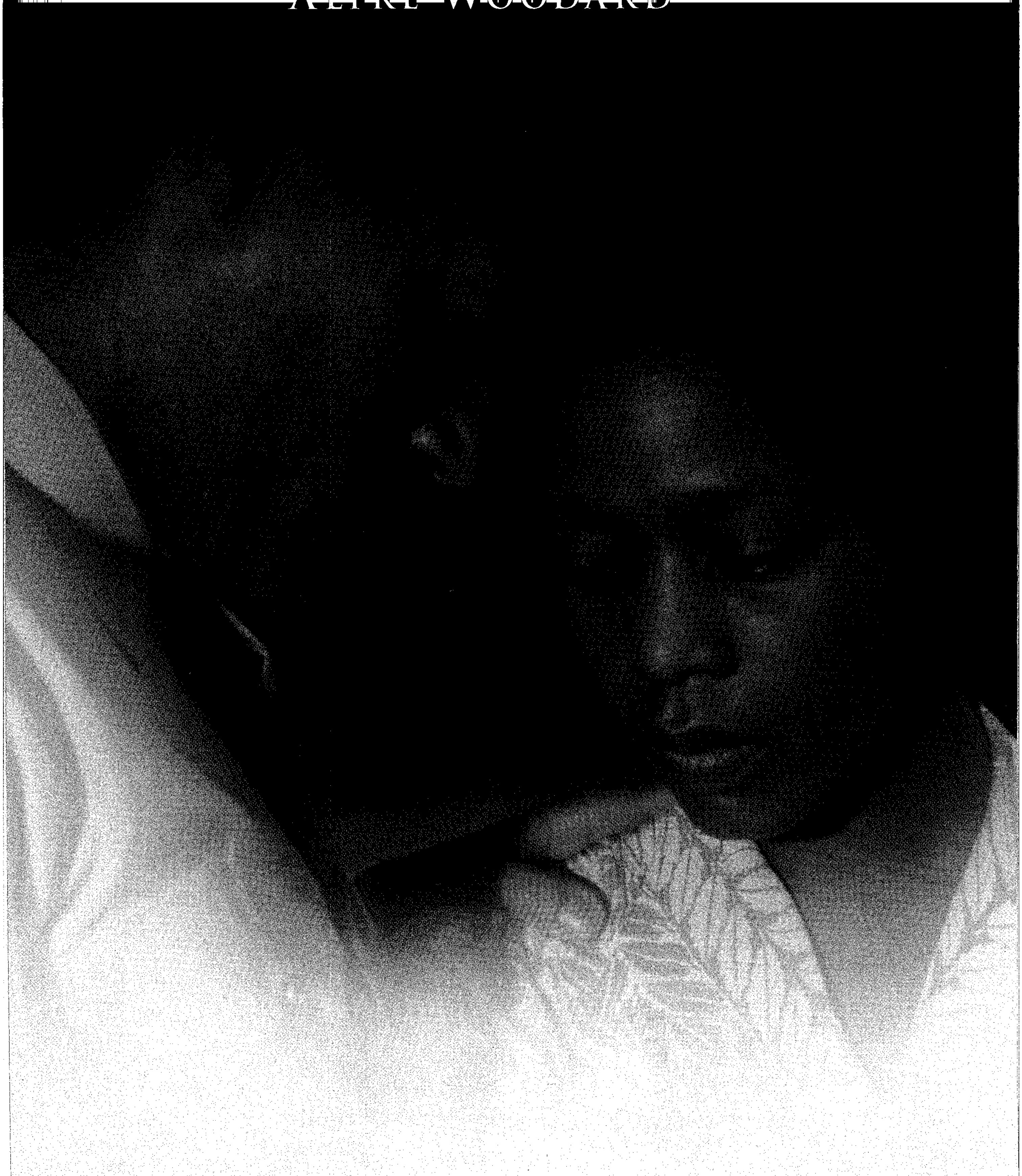

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THE NEW YORKER

FEBRUARY 17, 1997

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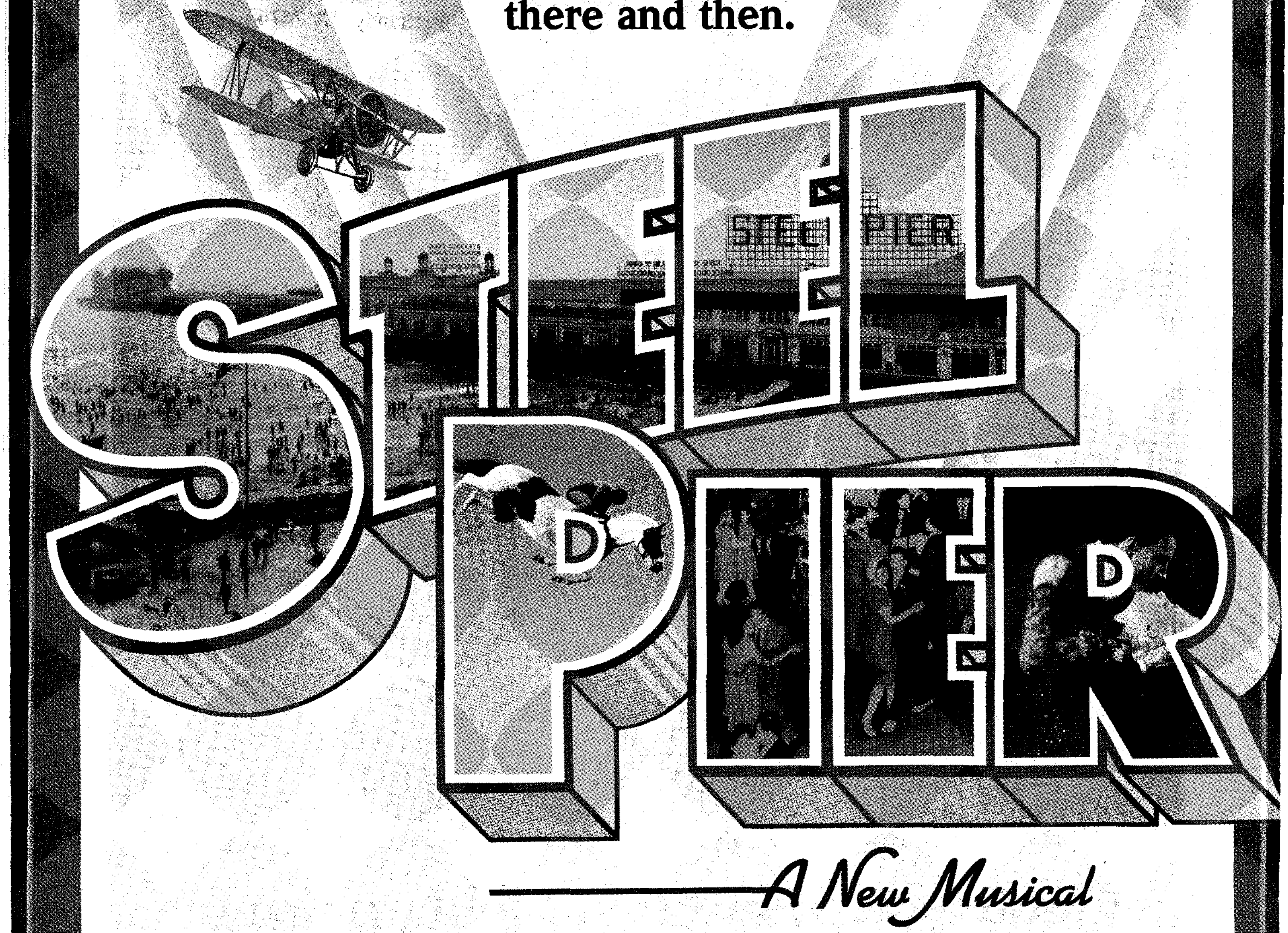

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COMMENT

HAZED AND CONFUSED

The ties that bind can be cruel.

LAST week, before O.J. and the State of the Union blew everything else away, the airwaves were full of violent hazing. Every channel, it seemed, was obsessively unspooling the latest of America's unfunniest home videos—the one that shows marines gleefully pounding spiked medals into the bleeding chests of screaming paratroop trainees. The only thing rare about this incident was the fact that it was captured on tape—unlike, for example, an inventive initiation at the Citadel a few years ago, when a cadet hung by his fingers, a sabre blade poised just below his genitals. Every year, young men die from being forced to drink too much, being beaten too much, being exposed to cold too much. Choose your perfect training regimen.

What dark secret of our social life feeds such rituals, making their participants apparently immune to good sense and decent conduct? There is more to it than meets even the unaverted eye. Initiation spans the world's cultures. Ceremonies of male initiation are nearly always more violent than their female counterparts (and when the two are melded, as, increasingly, they are in the modern American military, the clash of cultures and of expectations can become truly abusive). In one common sorority ceremony, pledges are stripped to their underwear, and upperclasswomen circle their excess body fat with Magic Markers. Not very nice, but mild compared to the chronically appalling ways that males devise to initiate one another by physically hurting one another. It's no accident that in community after community young men have to endure some demanding, often secret ritual in which their courage—or sometimes just their ability to shut up and take it—is challenged. Nelson Mandela, in his autobiography, describes his own acceptance of a harrowing circumcision during adolescence as a precondition for taking up adult responsibilities. And it is usually the adult society that decrees the ritual, but the young men who perform it often make it worse. They increase the pain, complicate the task, prolong the endurance.

What on earth do they think they're doing? In a word, they're testing each other: in military training camps (Lejeune as surely as Sparta), to prepare themselves to be warriors; on college campuses, to earn the respect and potentially useful friendship of their peers; in street gangs, to learn whom to trust. All this is almost comically primordial. But young men who can't imagine watching television without a remote endure terrible impositions, voluntarily. This reveals as much about their vulnerable need for belonging as about the possible cruelty and sadism of their superiors. Ini-

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Kennedy Fraser's
essays on
women's
lives

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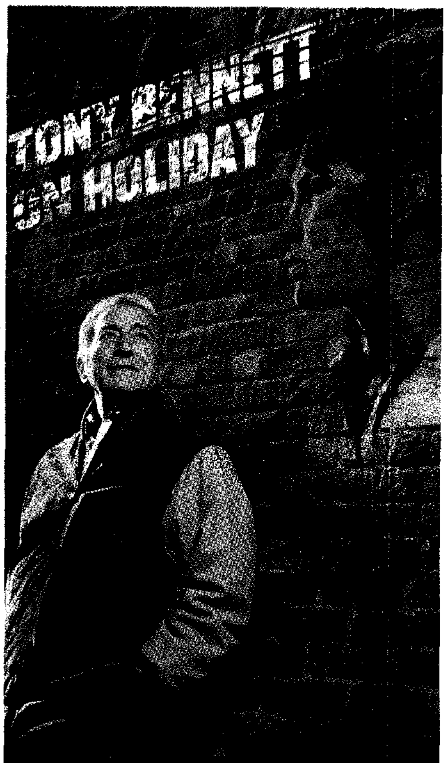

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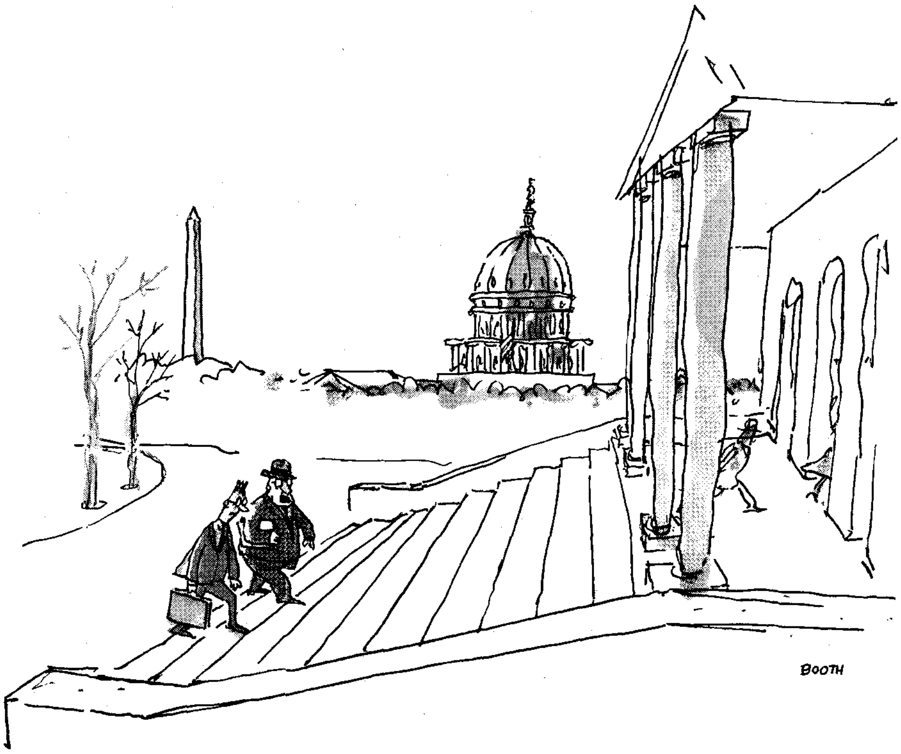

"And bear in mind that anything you say can be used against you in 'Doonesbury.'"

• •

tiation means acceptance—a certified spot in the group, a promise of haughty seniority, and a tight, intricate web of relationships that often last a lifetime.

Do the ceremonies work? There's little doubt that the culture of military service has historically tolerated occasional—and sometimes systematic—cruelties because, over all, the rituals produce troops willing to sacrifice for each other. An Air Force major was once asked why there were so many rituals of hierarchy in the military. He replied, "Because this is one of the few jobs where you may have to tell someone, 'Go die.'"

In an age of peacekeeping missions and cybernetic weapons, it remains to be seen if the distasteful folk-ferocity of initiations still prepares young men (to say nothing of young women) for effective warfare and its civilian equivalents. One would like to think not. But it is difficult to separate those rituals from the bonding with which they are associated. Academics who study the military are often surprised by the extraordinary efforts of commanders to prevent casualties or fatalities among their troops, for whom they feel an almost palpably tender responsibility. In strategic terms, this becomes the Powell Doctrine, which demands overwhelming force before an engagement. On a smaller scale, it reveals itself in a sense of group loyalty and interdependence as foreign to the academic world as on-call limos for assistant professors.

Many people—and especially many women—associate initiations, correctly, with a whole array of macho adventures which they are confident the world would be better off without. And there is plenty of reason to distrust men—and even boys—in groups. Peter Brook once said that when he was directing the film of "Lord of the Flies" the lad who played Piggy came to him in tears the night before they were to shoot the scene in which his character is killed and said that the boys had told him he would actually die. Had there been no adults in the environment, Brook said, the murderous dénouement of William Golding's merciless novel might well have reproduced itself in real life.

Secretary of Defense William Cohen and General Charles Krulak, the Marine commandant, have appropriately insisted on rigorous decency among their charges. They are the adults in the environment. Yet they should expect the strange passion of young males for stressful testing and for fierce, if arbitrary, loyalty to particular groups to recur in each new cadre that comes along. It is something not easily banished, and, truth to tell, something not always useless.

—LIONEL TIGER

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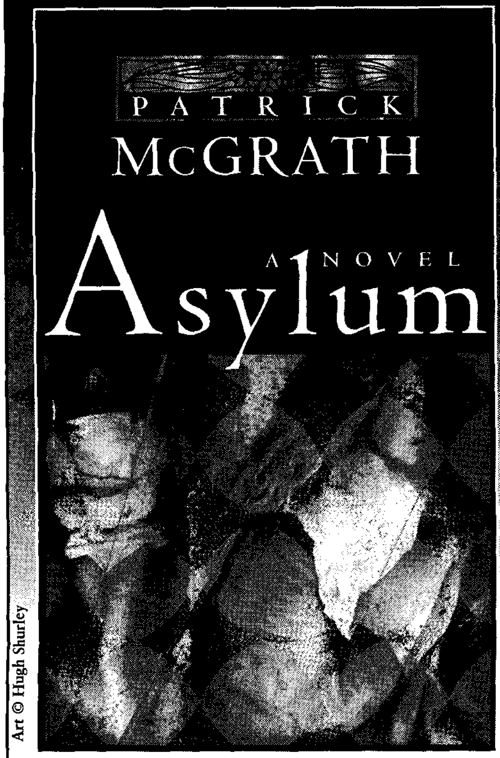

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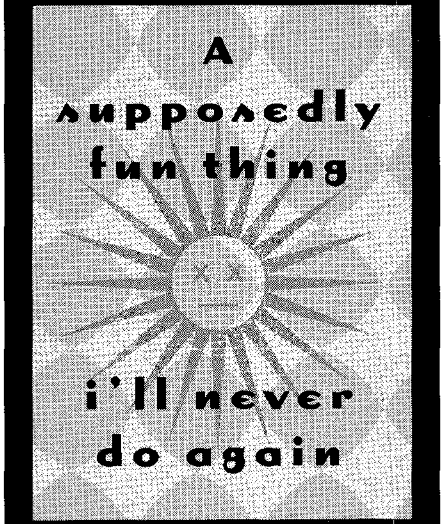

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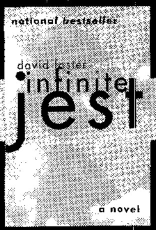

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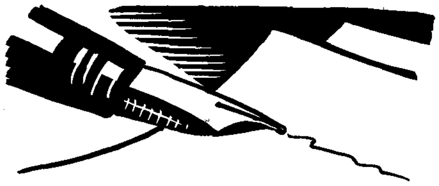


BRING IN DA FUNK

Discussing the Oakland school board's adoption of Ebonics (Comment, "Johnny Be Good," January 13th), Louis Menand notes that the mantra of subcultural worth degrades diversity to "mainstream mush." Thus ethnic family values, whether Italian-, Polish-, or Jewish-American, come to celebrate interchangeable Olde Worlde virtues, much as food in ethnic restaurants tastes more and more alike. But in saying that it makes no difference whether Ebonics harks back to West Africa, to Colonial America, or to slave pidgin, Menand is too sanguine. Rationally, it *should* make no difference, but heritage claims stem from faith, not reason; to dismiss them as mythic or mischievous is to neglect their enduring potency. "When [subcultures] acquire official patronage," Menand writes, "they're on the way to the museum." But museums are not morgues; as the Smithsonian's Enola Gay fracas showed, they are prime foci of partisan action.

DAVID LOWENTHAL
Middlesex, England

John Lahr, in "Speaking Across the Divide" (Our Local Correspondents, January 27th), points out that minority students' dialect is treated as a deficiency. But the vernacular always moves into the mainstream. If your family spoke as Jane Austen did, you'd feel phony—her vernacular is our mainstream language. While some distinctions are lost, others are invented in those areas of grammar that are not saddled with educational conservatism. We must understand what dialects are, and not allow language prejudice to replace racial prejudice. The reaction to black English reminds me of the initial reaction to modern art and to jazz, both of which were seen as threats to culture but instead came to be signal examples of cultural enrichment.

TOM ROEPER
Professor of Linguistics
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, Mass.

EYING WAGSTAFF

Sam Wagstaff and I were friends in Detroit in the late sixties and early seventies, when Sam was the curator of modern art at the Detroit Institute of Arts ("Wagstaff's Eye," by Hilton Als, January 13th). He truly hated photography then, considered it the least art, and fulminated against the Institute for exhibiting any photos in its halls. Then, one day early in 1970, he called me and said, "I've just had a mind-blowing experience. The most amazing photographer came by to show me his work. I'm going to follow in his footsteps." The photographer was Enrico Natali; Sam borrowed a Leica from him and took some photos. The results were not good. On my next visit to his office, Sam pointed out a French Impressionist painting leaning on his desk and said, "I'm going to sell it and my Pollock and use the money to start collecting photographs." Enrico deserves credit for changing Sam's opinion about the subject over which he eventually had so much influence.

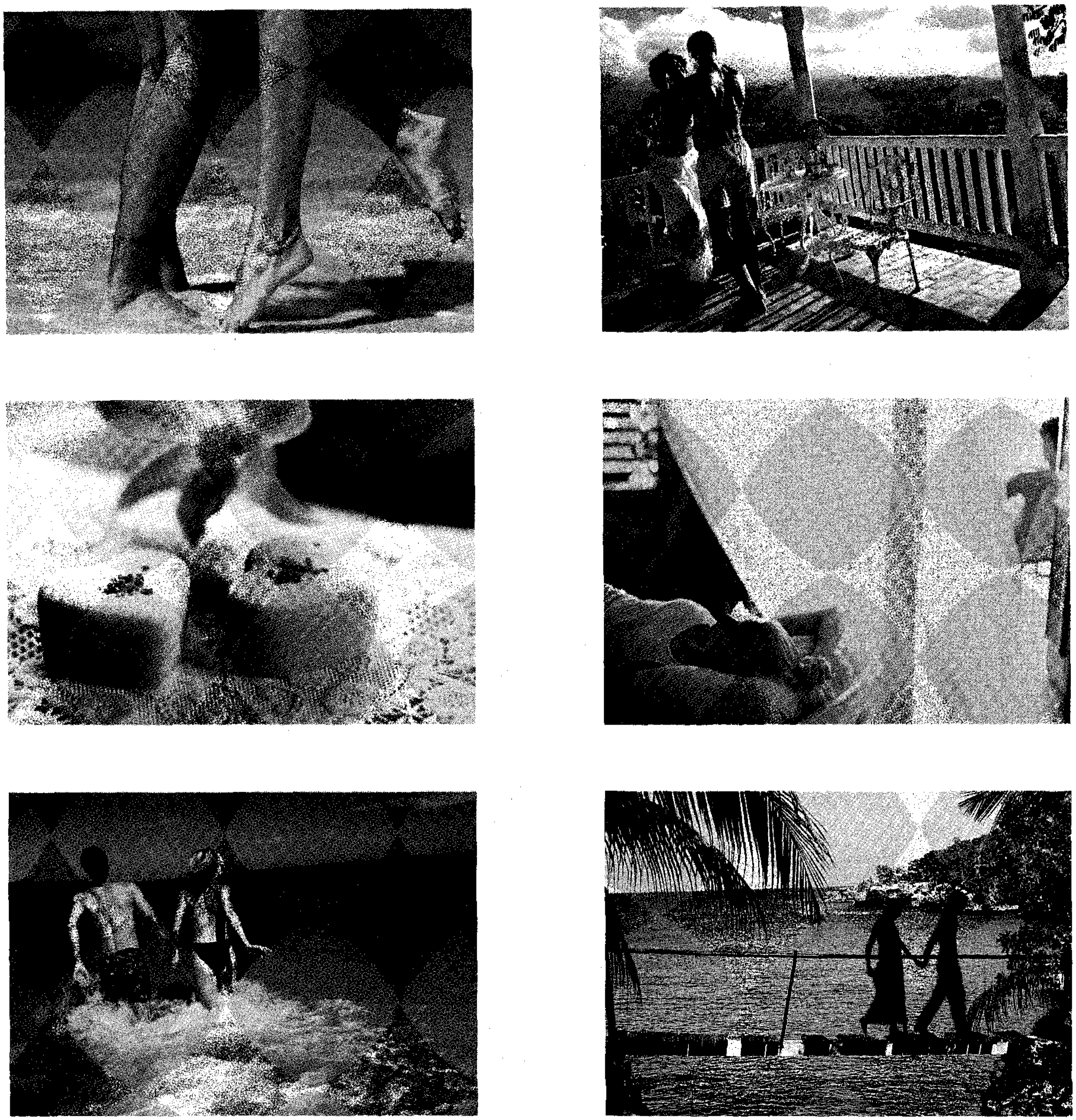
GEORGE BUTLER
New York City

I was startled by the views about Sam Wagstaff and Robert Mapplethorpe that Hilton Als attributed to me in "Wagstaff's Eye." I am portrayed as recounting personal recollections of Mr. Wagstaff's "patrician air" and his frequent references to ancestral links to Central Park. There appears to have been a serious miscommunication between me and Mr. Als: I barely knew Sam Wagstaff, and the opinions attributed to me were those of someone else, which I repeated to Mr. Als during a discussion of negotiations between the Wagstaff estate (which I represented as an attorney) and the New-York Historical Society. I also take issue with Mr. Als' rendition of my view of Robert Mapplethorpe.

MICHAEL WARD STOUT
President
The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, Inc.
New York City

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.

One Love



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Capitol Steps—A political revue performed by a troupe of former Congressional staff members. Preview on Feb. 12. Opens Feb. 13 at 8. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

The Changeling—Theatre for a New Audience's production of Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's Jacobean tragedy. Previews begin Feb. 17. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

Dreamstuff—A new musical based on the Aladdin tale but updated to the nineteen-nineties. In previews through Feb. 16. Opens Feb. 17 at 6:30. (Samuel Beckett, 412 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

Good as New—Mercedes Ruehl portrays a post-facelift wife and Jennifer Dundas and John Spencer her daughter and husband, in a drama by Peter Hedges. Previews begin Feb. 14. (MCC Theatre, 120 W. 28th St. 727-7765.)

A Huey P. Newton Story—Roger Guenveur Smith's solo portrait of the co-founder of the Black Panthers. Opens Feb. 12 at 8. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200.)

In-Betweens—A prostitute, a transvestite, and a couple of ex-cons make up the cast of characters in a darkly comic love story by Bryan Goluboff, set in the Bronx. In previews through Feb. 16. Opens Feb. 18 at 7. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

King Gordogan—The Croatian playwright Radovan Ivsic's 1943 satire stars Neil Maffin as a mad monarch and John Gould Rubin as his fool. Opens Feb. 13 at 8. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 439-4895.)

The Last Night of Ballyhoo—Alfred Uhry teams up again with Dana Ivey (who starred in the original production of his "Driving Miss Daisy") and Ron Lagomarsino (who directed it) to bring his romantic comedy—set in Atlanta in December 1939 during the Jewish social season—to Broadway. In previews. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100.)

Psychopathia Sexualis—John Patrick Shanley's new comedy, about a man with a fetish, stars Daniel Gerroll. Daniel Sullivan is the director. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

A Question of Mercy—A 1991 essay on doctor-assisted suicide published in the *Times Magazine* inspired this work by David Rabe. Douglas Hughes directs; Veanne Cox and Stephen Spinella are in the cast. In previews. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

Robbers—Michael Rapaport stars in Lyle Kessler's comedy, directed by Marshall W. Mason, in which a cannery hires an undercover agent to flush out thieving employees. In previews. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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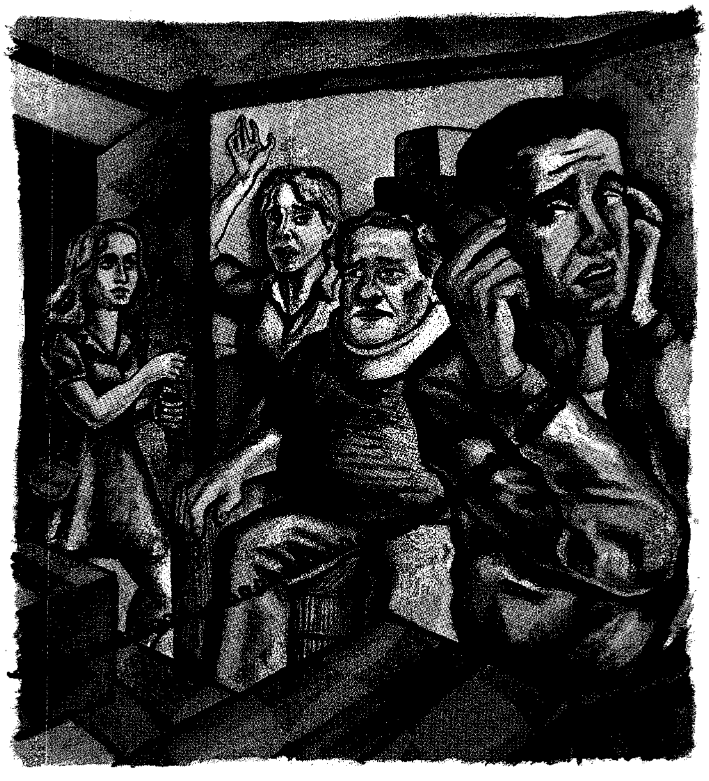
16	17	18				

Stanley—From London's Royal National Theatre comes Pam Gems's latest biographical play, starring Antony Sher as the English painter Stanley Spencer. Directed by John Caird. In previews. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

Stonewall Jackson's House—Jonathan Reynolds's comedy, set in the present, about a woman who pushes the racial envelope. In previews through the Feb. 16 matinée. Opens that evening at 7. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)



Catherine Kellner, Elizabeth Franz, Stephen Mendillo, and Matt McGrath, in "Minutes from the Blue Route."

ELIZABETH UYEHARA

Sweet Adeline—The Encores! series kicks off its fourth season with a concert staging of Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II's 1929 musical, directed by Rob Fisher. The brief engagement runs Feb. 13-14 at 8, Feb. 15 at 2 and 8, and Feb. 16 at 6:30. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Three Sisters—Amy Irving, Lili Taylor, and Jeanne Tripplehorn are Chekhov's despairing, hopeful trio and Billy Crudup, Eric Stoltz, and David Strathairn their suitors, in a Roundabout Theatre staging directed by Scott Elliott. Two previews on Feb. 12. Opens Feb. 13 at 7. (Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Tokyo Shock Boys—A troupe of Japanese vaudevillians who specialize in a brand of humor that involves ingesting, inhaling, and generally messing around with unlikely substances, objects, and animals. In previews. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

The Two Gentlemen of Verona—The Blue Light Theatre company, under the direction of Dylan Baker, has set Shakespeare's early comedy in Texas in 1876. Previews begin Feb. 14. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820.)

Violet—A musical based on Doris Betts's story "The Ugliest Pilgrim," about a scarred teenager's journey to seek the help of a TV faith healer. With music by Jeanine Tesori and book and lyrics by Brian Crawley. Directed by Susan H. Schulman. Previews begin Feb. 14. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Boychik—A comedy-drama by Richard Krevolin, starring Richard Kline as a middle-aged Jewish man dealing with the death of his father. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

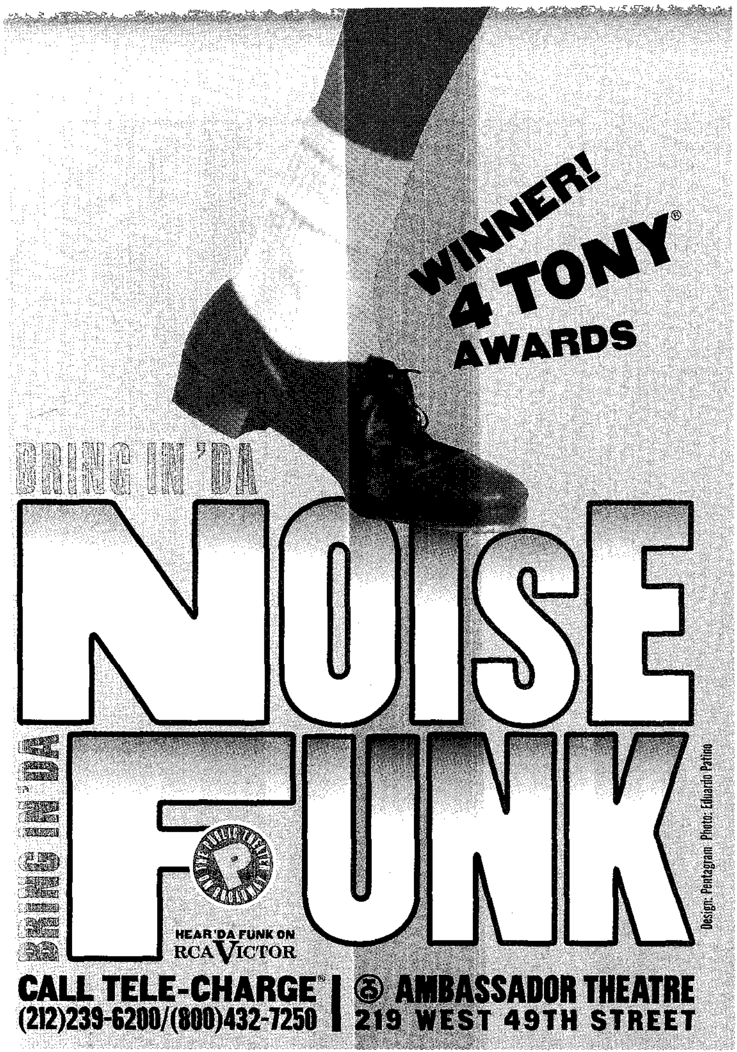
Chicago—Walter Bobbie's bookless, setless revival of the 1975 Kander-Ebb-Fosse extravaganza of cynicism has enough razzle-dazzle and flashes of lucid sarcasm to set the audience cheering almost from the start. The story is about a woman who gets away with murder; this pared-down concert posing as a full-dress musical may do the same. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/25/96.) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Do Lord Remember Me—In this New Federal Theatre revival of James de Jongh's 1977 play, which he based on W.P.A. interviews with freed slaves, the ensemble cast of five is so utterly convincing that the drama doesn't play as a mere polemic, and it isn't consumed by pain: it has some very funny scenes and a few moments of pure joy. Cleanly directed by Regge Life. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Closes Feb. 16.)

The Flatted Fifth—From the New Group, a new play by Seth Zvi Rosenfeld about multicultural relationships. With Danny Hoch, Sarita Choudhury, and Nicole Parker. Directed by Jo Bonney. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Forbidden Broadway Strikes Back!—Gerard Alessandrini cuts a satirical swath through the Great White Way in the latest edition of his musical parody. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.)

Full Gallop—The legendary, vividly eccentric fashion editor Diana Vreeland is the subject of Mary Louise Wilson and Mark Hampton's one-woman play, in which Wilson stars. Set in 1971, shortly after Vreeland was fired from



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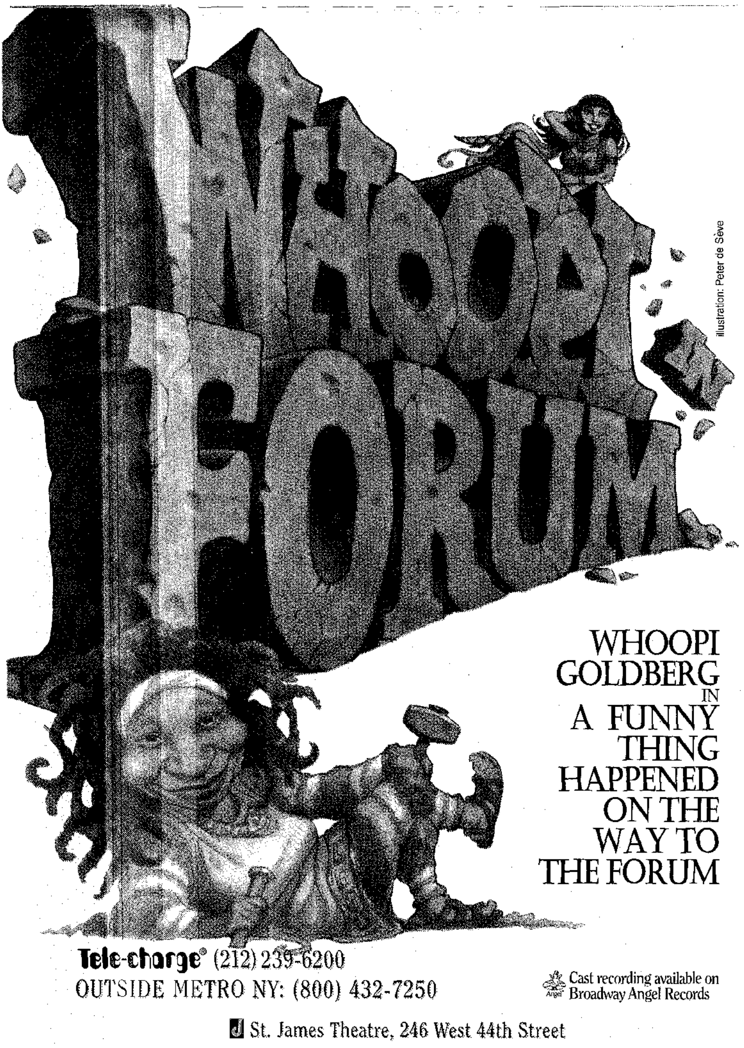

WHOOPI ON FORUM

Illustration: Peter de Sève

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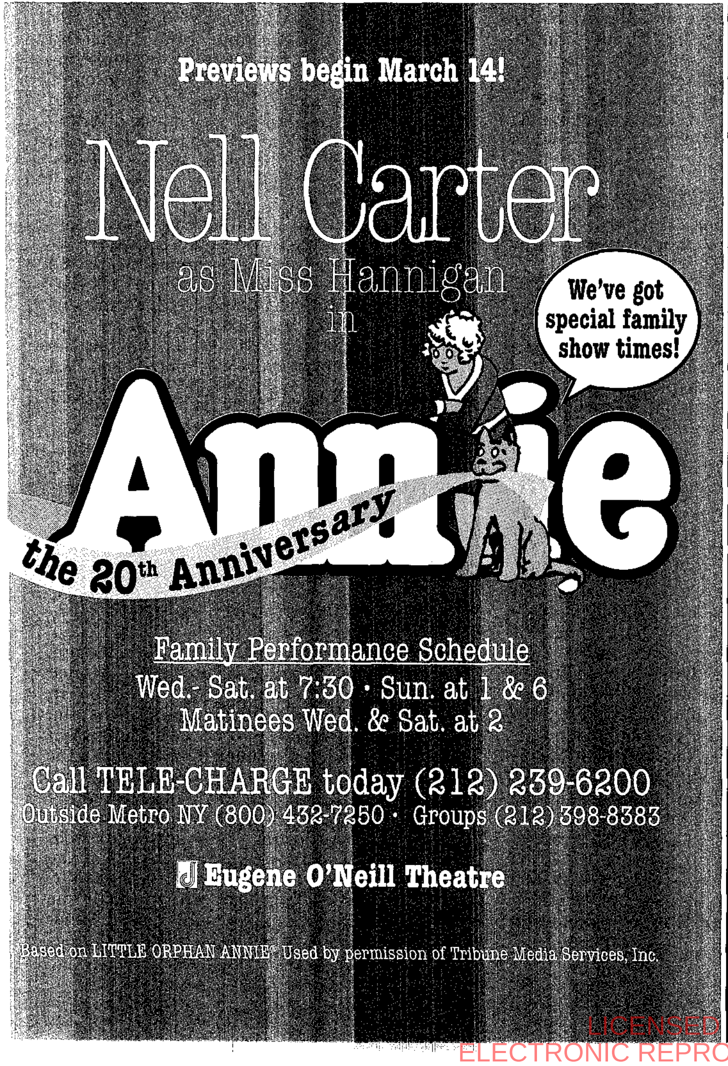

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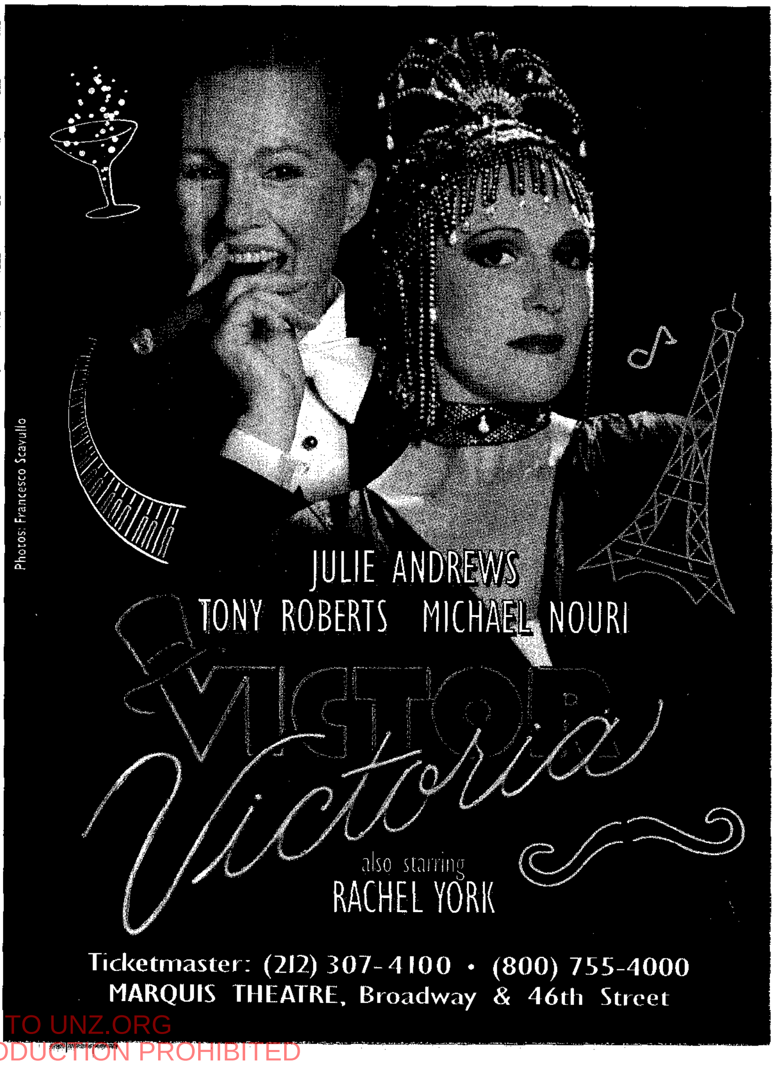

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Hysterical Blindness—Jared Harris is the director of Laura Cahill's new play, which revolves around the lives of two blue-collar New Jersey women. ('A' Theatre, 154 W. 29th St. 995-8949. Closes March 2.)

Joseph Gabriel: Magic on Broadway—Mr. Gabriel has performed at the Las Vegas Flamingo Hilton for the past ten years, and his feats are certainly impressive, but it's all too clear from the trappings of his act—dancers in polka-dotted boxer shorts, a sequinned Elvis—that he hasn't left Nevada behind. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Late Nite Catechism—Maripat Donovan offers a commandingly funny performance as the lone nun in charge of an adult catechism class, and the audience brings as much to the performance as the script does. (St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

The Little Frieda Mysteries—The Talent Family (the brother-and-sister writing team of David and Amy Sedaris) returns to La Mama with a new comedy, starring Ms. Sedaris, David Rakoff, Penny Boyer, and Chuck Coggins. (74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

Minutes from the Blue Route—Tom Donaghy's family drama, directed by David Warren. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

My Astonishing Self—Donal Donnelly impersonates George Bernard Shaw, in a one-man show by Michael Voysey. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Feb. 23.)

Old Wicked Songs—Jon Marans' well-written piece of sentimental sanctimony asks the question: Can a blocked, arrogant twenty-five-year-old pianist (Justin Kirk) find wisdom under the tutelage of a suicidal singing teacher (Hal Robinson) who survived the Holocaust? (The answer is yes.) (9/16/96) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Once Upon a Mattress—That modern madcap Sarah Jessica Parker shines as the princess in Gerald Gutierrez's revival of Mary Rodgers's silly, marshmallowy 1959 musical, based on Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale "The Princess and the Pea," but she deserves a vehicle that, to paraphrase Jerome Kern, is not merely lovely to look at but delightful to know. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Permanent Brain Damage—Richard Foreman and his Ontological-Hysteric Theatre's latest attempt to stop making sense is, strictly speaking, successful, but this new work is jarringly assaultive rather than jarringly provocative. Still, it will knock some of the dust off your brain. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

Peter and Wendy—The experimental theatre troupe Mabou Mines' interpretation of J. M. Barrie's tale about the boy who wouldn't grow up and the girl who loved him features Bunraku puppets and Celtic music. Directed by Lee Breuer. (New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. Closes March 2.)

The Portable Pioneer and Prairie Show—Mel Marvin and David Chambers's song-filled show about Swedish settlers in America. (Theatre of the Riverside Church, W. 120th St. and Riverside Dr. 279-4200. Closes Feb. 23.)

Present Laughter—As the monumentally egotistical West End star Garry Essendine, Frank Langella keeps the core of Noël Coward's 1939 comedy of bad manners alive with a full-tilt assault on the character's outrageousness. Unfortunately, the director, Scott Elliott, seems to think that he's liberating Coward by turning the play into a bisexual romp. (11/25/96) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Scapin—Bill Irwin's production (he has the title role, he directed, and, with the playwright Mark O'Donnell, he adapted the script) of Molière's comedy is a perfect blend of sweetness and anarchy. Some of the casting is questionable, but Christopher Evan Welch, who is making his New York début, raises only the question "When will we see him again?" He's sensational: game, rubbery, and hilarious, and every bit Irwin's clownish equal. (1/27/97) (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Seeing Things—In *Vogue* editor and first-time playwright Michael Boodro's drama, set in Boston in the late sixties and early seventies, a runaway teen-age boy gets unhappily involved in pornography. (Altered Stages, 212 W. 29th St. 642-5305. Closes Feb. 22.)

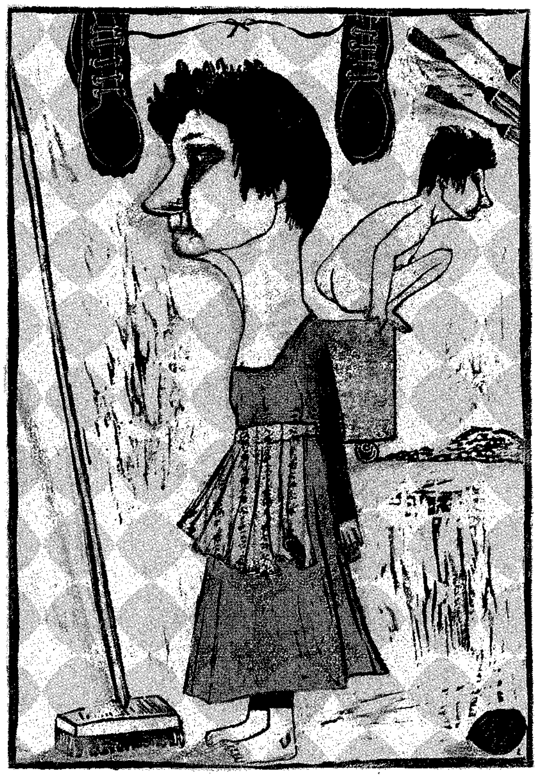
Signature Theatre Company—The Sam Shepard season continues with three one-acts directed by Darrell Larson: "The Sad Lament of Pecos Bill on the Eve of Killing His Wife," "Killer's Head," and "Action." (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200.)

The Steward of Christendom—A majestic work by Sebastian Barry—as powerful an Irish play as has been written in the last decade—with a bravura performance by Donal McCann which explores how one loyal servant to the Crown is betrayed by the tides of history and change. It's set in a County Wicklow nursing home in 1932, and its title character is based on Barry's great-grandfather, who was the last chief superintendent of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. Presented by the Brooklyn Academy of Music, under the direction of Max Stafford-Clark. (Majestic, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100.)

Venice Preserv'd—But perhaps for a little too long. Thomas Otway's 1685 drama, a big hit for more than two hundred years, now seems more melodrama than tragedy: a whining wimp leads a cast of sketchily drawn speechifiers, and even with strong actors and a fine production the Pearl Theatre Company can't make much of it. The comic bits work best, and Robin Leslie Brown, as a courtesan, and Robert Hock, in the role of a drunken, lecherous senator, create one of the funniest scenes of the season. As a reminder that today's soap operas have a respectable past, the play couldn't be better, but it hasn't retained much resonance. Directed by Rich Cole. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

LONG RUNS

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. (Closes Feb. 23.) . . . **HOWARD CRABTREE'S WHEN PIGS FLY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **THE KING AND I:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. . . . **MASTER CLASS:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **ROB BECKER'S DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN:** Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 307-4100. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SUNSET BOULEVARD:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **VICTOR/VICTORIA:** Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.



Yvonne Meier's "Mad Heidi," at Danspace.

FRANCES JETTER

DANCE

New York City Ballet—Feb. 12 at 8: "Scotch Symphony," "Brandenburg," and "Fancy Free." . . . Feb. 13 at 8: "Agon," "A Schubertiad," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." . . . ¶ Feb. 14 at 8: "Fancy Free," "Dances at a Gathering," and "I'm Old Fashioned." . . . ¶ Feb. 15 at 2: "Scotch Symphony," "Schoenberg/Wuorinen Variations," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," and "Fearful Symmetries." . . . ¶ Feb. 15 at 8: "Brandenburg," "Agon," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." . . . ¶ Feb. 16 at 3: "Fearful Symmetries," "Dances at a Gathering," and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 8: "Firebird," "Dances at a Gathering," and "Cortège Hongrois." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. The season continues through March 2.)

Smuin Ballets/SF—Michael Smuin has choreographed for film, stage, and ice; his thirteen-member troupe appears, sans skates, in "Frankie & Johnny," "One Step Forward to Bach," "Brahms/Haydn Variations," and "La Calandria." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Feb. 11-14 at 8, Feb. 15 at 2 and 8, and Feb. 16 at 2 and 7:30.)

"Three's the One"—Choreographer Hank Smith, dancer Cynthia Oliver, and composer David Pleasant collaborate on a new work—"a combination jam session and ritual," according to Smith—that explores differences between black American cultures (for instance, ways that Gullah songs and dances differ from Trinidadian ones) as well as sources of unity. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Feb. 13-16 at 7:30.)

"Mad Heidi"—The Swiss choreographer Yvonne Meier's cantankerous images are at once matter-of-fact and absurd. At one point in her examination of enduring Swiss myths, she sheds her Alpine boots (and everything else) and climbs into a wooden box; an assistant enters and, in an orderly fashion, dumps buckets of mud on her. Any Freudian implications ("We have to dig in the unconscious," Meier explains, with a straight face) take second place to the sheer forcefulness of the event: her mad Heidi is, above all, energetic. She yodels, she sweeps, she sticks forks in the wall. "We are simple, we are good," Meier says, in a sendup of the Swiss national character. "You know, running around with the goats in the mountains." (Danspace, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Feb. 13-16 at 8:30.)

"CARNIVAL"—Dance Theatre Workshop inaugurates its six-week midwinter performance festival with star turns from two veterans. Feb. 13 and Feb. 15 at 8: Sally Silvers and her company expand last year's "Pandora's Cake Stain" into the evening-length "Secrets Of." Through Feb. 22. . . . ¶ Feb. 14 at 8 and Feb. 16 at 3: Cydney Wilkes and an ad-hoc company of women dancers perform "Aire of an Earthquake," a cycle of solo and group works set to the music of Zeena Parkins. Wilkes continues through March 1. (219 W. 19th St. 691-6500.)

"AFTER SORROW"—Director Ping Chong completes his East/West trilogy in a collaboration with choreographer Muna Tseng and composer Josef Fung. This installment consists of four solos by Tseng: "L'Histoire Chinoise," "The Whisper of Stone," "98.6: A Convergence in 15 Minutes," and the title work, a portrait of contemporary Vietnam. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Feb. 12-14 at 7:30 and Feb. 15 at 3 and 7:30.)

THUNDERBIRD AMERICAN INDIAN DANCERS—The twentieth annual powwow of Native American dancers features a buffalo dance of Hopi origin, a jingle-dress dance from the Northern Plains, a modern dance from the L.A.-based Choctaw choreographer Michael Taylor, and a performance of "Hand Drum Songs" by an intertribal combo, the Shy Women Singers. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109. Feb. 14-15 at 8 and Feb. 16 at 2 and 5. Through Feb. 23.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

FRED HO AND THE AFRO ASIAN MUSIC ENSEMBLE—Ho, an inventive and compelling saxophonist, composer, and bandleader, is Asian—an anomaly in jazz, and he runs with it, incorporating ethnic and cultural elements in his music. He's joined here by a troupe of martial artists and the dynamic poet Jayne Cortez. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Feb. 13 at 8.)

HASSAN HAKMOUN—The Moroccan singer, dancer, and *sintir* player and his ensemble perform Arab and Berber popular songs and music from religious trance ceremonies. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Feb. 15 at 8.)

THE WHISPERS / THE DELLS / BLUE MAGIC—Doowop and R. & B. heaven. (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 864-0372. Feb. 15 at 7 and 11.)

"AFRICA IN AMERICA"—An evening of early African-American music and dance, with the Fist and Heel Performance Group, La Troupe Makandal, Los Pleneros de la 21, and Othar Turner and the Rising Star Fife and Drum Band; hosted by actor and choreographer Geoffrey Holder. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Feb. 15 at 8.)

BUCKY PIZZARELLI AND FAMILY—The Pizzarellis are a talented clan. Father Bucky may be the most elegant and skilled mainstream guitarist around; son John, a guitarist and singer, has an easy way with both standards and his own witty originals; son Martin plays fine bass; and daughter Mary plays guitar. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. 752-1428. Feb. 16 at 5.)

TIBET HOUSE BENEFIT—With scheduled appearances by Tibetan singer Yungchen Lhamo, the Drepung Loseling monks, Patti Smith, Philip Glass, John Cale, Allen Ginsberg, Natalie Merchant, Michael Stipe, Ben Harper, and Billy Corgan. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Feb. 17 at 7:30.)

TONY BENNETT—The hype behind his promotion to MTV hipster has died down, but Tony Bennett is far from over. His voice is still sublime, his stage presence elegant and congenial, and his choice of material—particularly on his new Billie Holiday tribute, "Tony Bennett on Holiday"—as impeccable today as it was forty years ago. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 18-19 at 8.)

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CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Feb. 14: **BUSTER POINDEXTER AND HIS BANSHEES OF BLUE.** Feb. 15: "Solo and Intimate" with **WARREN HAYNES, KEVIN KINNEY,** and **EDWIN MC CAIN.** Feb. 16: Rocking bluesmen **JOHNNY WINTER** and **RICK DERRINGER** and their bands. Feb. 17: **ED PALERMO** and his big band perform the music of Frank Zappa. Feb. 18: When **MADELEINE PEYROUX** performed last spring at a Lincoln Center tribute to Duke Ellington, it was widely observed that the twentysomething singer seemed capable of channelling the spirit of Billie Holiday. With her jazzy phrasing and astonishing clarity, she does indeed recall Lady Day, but on her remarkable (and sorely overlooked) début album, "Dreamland," she also finds her way into the songs of Bessie Smith and Patsy Cline.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving. Feb. 13: **DANIELLE'S MOUTH.** Feb. 14: **CHEROKEE SEX WORKSHOP.**

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Dedicated to the music of the Windy City. Feb. 13: Seventeen-year-old guitar tyro **"MONSTER" MIKE WELCH.** Feb. 15: **C. J. CHENIER.**

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Feb. 13: The **MARSHALL TUCKER BAND.** Because these guys favor cowboy hats and facial hair, their records are often dumped in "Southern Rock" bins, but compared with Molly Hatchet and Lynyrd Skynyrd, they're a tuneful and adventurous bunch; their songs even feature the occasional flute solo. Feb. 14: A valentine of brand-new songs by **THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS.** Feb. 15: **WILCO.** When the acclaimed country-punk group Uncle Tupelo disbanded, singer Jay Farrar went on to form Son Volt, while his former songwriting partner, Jeff Tweedy, gave the world the more charismatic Wilco. Tweedy's songs are less piercing than Farrar's tortured vignettes, but his band has terrific enthusiasm: with slithering fiddles, cranking guitars, and rootsy charm, they turn every gig into a hoedown.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Feb. 12: **ERIC BOGOSIAN** talks up a storm. Feb. 13: Is **ALEX CHILTON** the most underrated or the most overrated artist in the history of rock and roll? It's a question that remains unanswered about the man from Memphis who (as a high-school sophomore) put the gravel into the Box Tops' classic, "The Letter." Over the past three decades, he's been the leader of Big Star, the Cramps' producer, a dishwasher, and the subject of a Replacements song; these days, he seems content to cut records that showcase his sardonic approach to blues, rockabilly, country, and R. & B. (his latest is "A Man Called Destruction"). Like any self-respecting cult hero, Chilton can be a surly pill who occasionally disses his worshipful audience with a lousy show. But the risk is worth it—he's the closest thing we have to a one-man time line of American pop. With **SUCK PRETTY.** Feb. 14: A former Blake Baby, **JULIANA HATFIELD** doesn't particularly enjoy being a girl, but some people relish her tales of post-feminist self-loathing and post-adolescent ennui. Perhaps it's her coy but surprisingly supple voice that captures them. It must be difficult knowing that you could have been as big as Courtney Love. Feb. 15: **JAMES (BLOOD) ULMER.** Feb. 16: The **DAVID MURRAY** octet. He may have had his thunder stolen by the neo-con explosion, but Murray, the great hope of the eighties, is still a contender and still capable of toppling buildings with his galvanic tenor-saxophone work. Feb. 17: **VERNON REID'S MY SCIENCE PROJECT,** the latest offering from the former Living Colour guitarist. Feb. 18: **GERI ALLEN** and the **DON BYRON** quintet. A noteworthy double bill: pianist Allen, performing solo, can cover so many bases so well that forecasting her intentions is foolhardy; clarinettist Byron, another extravagantly gifted eclectic, backs up his reach with staunch musicianship.

TABLES FOR TWO

The Sign of the Dove, 1110 Third Ave., at 65th St. (861-8080)—This felicitous restaurant is reputed to be one of the city's most magical corners, and it's safe to say that if a date here doesn't work out, it's probably the relationship. Magic is certainly part of the production. After your food appears, the waiters seem to vanish, silent as silk handkerchiefs. The food isn't tricky, though: the appetizers are, in fact, appetizing, the entrées—snapper, lobster, strip steak, rack of lamb—solid and straightforward. But it's not the food you remember, good as it is; the real enchantment is in the place itself.

The secret seems to lie in the proportions. At dinner, the lights are set to a bright glow. Tables stand far enough apart to make the room feel spacious but near enough so that during a pause in conversation you can sense the convivial murmur. Even the flowers—a small bouquet of bridal-white freesias, tuberoses, and calla lilies one recent evening—have been cut to a height that allows you to enjoy unhindered views of your tablemate.

No doubt this light touch comes from Joseph Santo, the oral surgeon who opened the place thirty-four years ago with the implausible ambition of making a little side money until his dental practice got off the ground. Somehow the gamble paid off. There probably aren't many other graduates of the St. Louis University Dental School whose itemized bills include a delicate smoked-salmon consommé, an ethereal chocolate-chestnut opera cake, or a chablis that tastes, in the words of the sommelier, "as clean as river pebbles." (Open daily for dinner, Tuesdays through Fridays for lunch, and weekends for brunch. Entrées $22-$38.)

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The Upper East Side blues. Feb. 13: **SUGAR BLUE,** whose harp work (most famously on the Stones' "Miss You") has earned him the sobriquet Jimi Hendrix of the Harmonica. Feb. 14: The **ROXY PERRY** blues band. Feb. 15: The **SHIRLEY LEWIS EXPEREE-ANCE.**

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-4064)—Feb. 15: The **TOASTERS.** Feb. 18: Kansas native **FREEDY JOHNSTON** has a knack for churning out exacting folk-rock with a convincing Midwestern twang; his songs bristle with careful detail and piercing language. His mostly perfect "This Perfect World" captured a misshapen planet inhabited by broken folks pushed to desperate measures. He should know: he sold the family farm to support his career, an experience chronicled on his superior 1992 record, "Can You Fly" (which began with the line "Well, I sold the dirt to feed the band"). His new record is called "Never Home." With the **CANDY BUTCHERS.**

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. Feb. 14-16: The club's fourteenth annual **BRAZILIAN CARNIVAL,** with **JULIANA AQUINO.** Dining.

Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—Feb. 12: The **JAZZ PASSENGERS** with **DEBBIE HARRY.** Though they still enjoy a joke more than your average band, these days the Jazz Passengers take themselves quite seriously as musicians—a fact that has helped them survive while other eighties downtown figures have fallen. At their least affected, they make clever, uncategorizable music, particularly when they're joined by the perpetually graceful Ms. Harry.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Feb. 13-14: Crazy, industrial-strength rockabilly with **REVEREND HORTON HEAT.** With **NY LOOSE.** Feb. 15: An evening of Cajun pop with **BEAUSOLEIL** and **LOUP GAROU.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—The impudent goofiness of guitarist and vocalist **JOHN PIZZARELLI** (see Concerts) has brought a fresh breeze to the stuffy old Oak Room, but it grows still on Feb. 15. Dining.

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—The legendary club has a new address and bigger digs. Feb. 12: The **WALTER BISHOP** trio. Feb. 14-16: The **DIANA KRALL** trio. The ever evolving pianist and singer celebrated the music of the Nat Cole trio on her last recording, "All for You." She's roped in two superb players to recreate the streamlined lift of Cole's drummerless group: bassist **CHRISTIAN MC BRIDE** and guitarist **RUSSELL MALONE.** Feb. 17: The **TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI** jazz orchestra. Feb. 18: The **STEVE SLAGLE** quartet. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, and a gift shop. Through Feb. 16: **JOE LOVANO.** "Celebrating Sinatra," the saxophonist's recent valentine to the Chairman of the Board, is yet another feather in the cap of a brilliant instrumentalist who regularly produces landmark recordings. He'll have strings and additional horns with him here to recapture the luxuriant textures of Manny Albam's stunning arrangements. Feb. 17: The **GEORGE MRAZ** quartet. If the exceptional bassist's quartet achieves the quiet intensity of his "Mraz Jazz" and of his masterly "My Foolish Heart," this will be a performance to treasure. Starting Feb. 18: The **GONZALO RUBALCABA** trio and the **ROY HAYNES** quartet. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Feb. 16: The **TERENCE BLANCHARD/DONALD HARRISON** quintet. They've spent the better part of this decade on their own, but now trumpeter Blanchard and saxophonist Harrison are together again. The extensive terrain they covered while they were apart—Blanchard scored films for Spike Lee and investigated Brazilian music, Harrison explored his New Orleans roots and became a valued sideman for, among others, Roy Haynes—can only give their current work greater reach. Starting Feb. 18: The **PHAROAH SANDERS** quartet. Dining.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, and a piano. Feb. 12-15: **LARRY RIVERS AND HIS CLIMAX BAND.** If Ornette Coleman can paint, then why shouldn't Larry Rivers play the saxophone? Both show talent and enthusiasm; neither should quit his day job.

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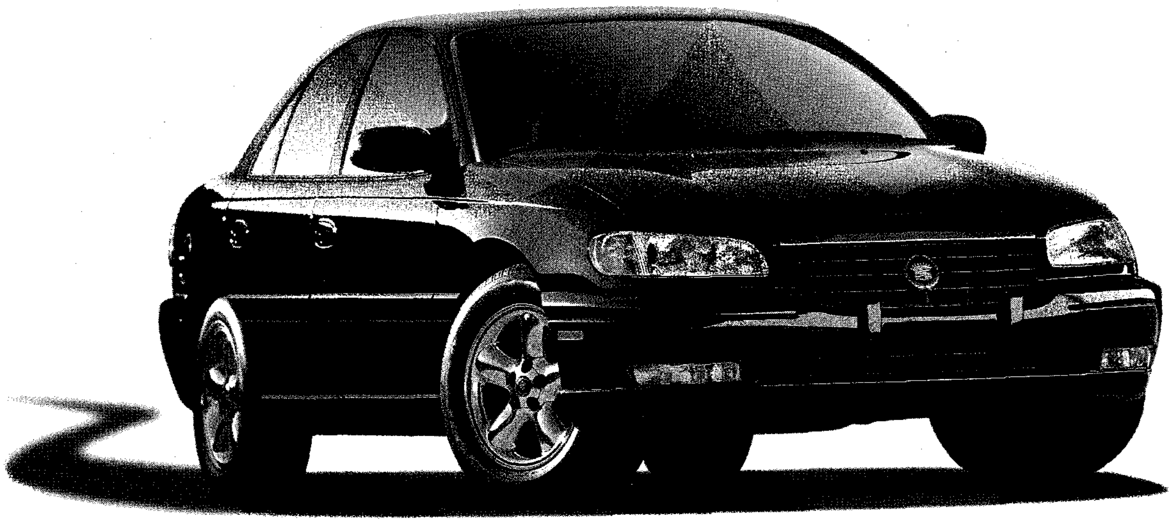

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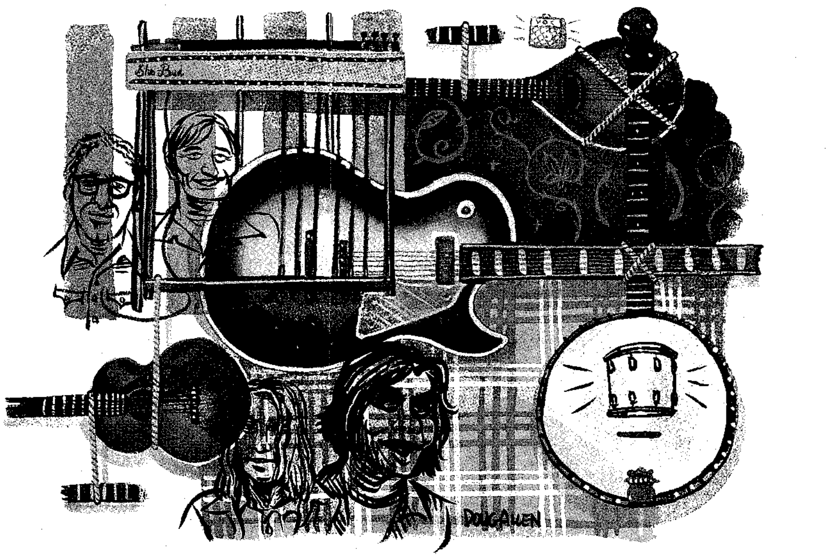
Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—A plush, old-fashioned night club, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. At the start of his career, in the postwar forties and fifties, **Vic Damone** (in through February) embodied the placid opulence of the era: he was polite and handsome, and his voice was as smooth and lustrous as silk taffeta (and just as stiff). He doesn't swing, but his phrasing is conversational, as are his wonderful stories about growing up in Bensonhurst—and the voice itself is still something to marvel at.... ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.



The charismatic, rootsy stylings of Wilco, at Irving Plaza.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—Feb. 12: The jazz clarinet has been injected with new life by the work of virtuosos like Ken Peplowski and Marty Ehrlich, but the standard remains **Kenny Davern:** for the past four decades he has tapped into the spirits of licorice-stick iconoclasts such as Pee Wee Russell by keeping quirky individuality on the same elevated level as sterling technique. He's accompanied here by **John Bunch** (guitar), **Greg Cohen** (bass), and **Tony DeNicola** (drums). Thursdays belong to Stan Rubin's big band, Fridays to Lew Anderson's big band, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A convivial and crowded jazz club where the musicians are always top-shelf. Through Feb. 16: The **Gary Bartz** quartet. From Feb. 18: The **Marty Ehrlich** quintet. Dining.

Village Gate, 240 W. 52nd St. (307-5252)—Through Feb. 15: The **Bob Kindred** quartet. Starting Feb. 18: The **Valery Ponomarev** quartet. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Feb. 16: Who's **Larry Smith**? From the only evidence most of us have—his guest appearance on James Carter's "Conversing with the Elders"—he's a proficient bop altoist; undoubtedly there's more to this picture. For reassuring names, turn to Smith's band for the week: pianist **John Hicks**, drummer **Idris Muhammad**, and bassist **Curtis Lundy**. Starting Feb. 18: **Benny Green and Kaleidoscope**. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** still holds sway on Mondays.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. Through Feb. 15: The sharp modernist stylings of **Joanne Brackeen** (piano) are paired with the powerful instrumentalism of master **Cecil Mc Bee** (bass).

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Giambattista Tiepolo." This ravishing assembly—more than sixty works, mostly paintings—strongly suggests that the eighteenth-century Venetian master, a pivot between the baroque and the rococo, is due for a fin-de-siècle reëvaluation. (He has been not so much dismissed as sidelined by modernist sensibilities mistrustful of his bravura decorative theatricality.) He was something like the Lubitsch of his day, but an element of frivolity does not preclude greatness. "Hagar and Ishmael," "Time Uncovering Truth," and the "Triumph of Zephyr and Flora" demonstrate his lightness of touch in three very different ways; his self-portrait as "Apelles Painting Campaspe," for all its charm, is in no way trivial. Surely no other painter leavened highly dramatic compositions with more wit and inventiveness. Through April 27.... ¶ The Costume Institute's much heralded "Christian Dior" blockbuster displays more than eighty opulent items from the decade beginning in 1947, when the designer first presented his influential New Look. Through March 23.... ¶ "Late Klee" showcases twenty seldom seen drawings, paintings, and watercolors from 1925 to 1940. Through April 13.... ¶ "The Gods of War: Sacred Imagery and the Decoration of Arms and Armor." (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Willem de Kooning: The Late Paintings, the 1980s." Forty examples from the Abstract Expressionist's final working decade. Through April 29. (For more de Kooning, see Galleries—Uptown.)... ¶ "The Maximal Sixties: Pop, Op, and Figuration." Iconic work by Lichtenstein, Oldenburg, Polke, Fahlström, Samaras, and other Aquarian artists. Through April 29. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"Rrose Is a Rrose Is a Rrose: Gender Performance in Photography." The title plays on "mannish" Gertrude Stein's most famous line of poetry as well as on the name of Marcel Duchamp's transvestite alter ego, Rrose Sélavy. The exhibition's curator, Jennifer Blessing, has assembled eighty photographic portraits and multipart montages by twenty-four artists whose work engages the fashionable topic of the construction of gender identity. But the quality and intelligence of the choices and their juxtapositions make this show anything but a retread of familiar material. Through April 27. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—"Bill Viola: Fire, Water, Breath." Two ambitious, large-scale works of both formal and intellectual daring by one of our preëminent video artists. Using sophisticated technical effects and often startling audio elements, Viola manipulates video in ways that can be overwhelming and even off-putting, but the demands he makes on his viewers are well rewarded. Through March 23. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—"Making Mischief," an excellent exhibition chronicling the Dada invasion of New York, from the Great War through the early twenties. Through Feb. 23.... ¶ "A Passion for Pictures: Selections from the Charles H. Carpenter Collection and Selections from the Charles Simon Collection." Through March 9. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Whitney Museum at Philip Morris, Park Ave. at 42nd St. (878-2550)—"Romare Bearden in Black and White: Photomontage Projections 1964." Twenty-four small collages in color, principally from photos snipped from magazines, then enlarged into black-and-white Photostats. The images of African-Americans are variously warm and evocative; everywhere, the patchwork faces and figures suggest the fragmentation of American society. Through March 20. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 11 to 7:30.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Rediscovering James Brooks: W.P.A. Murals and Other Figural Works" features studies for "Flight," the artist's history of aviation from Daedalus to Pan Am. Through May 11. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St. (744-8181)—"Adornment and Eternity: Status and Rank in Chinese Ornament" presents twenty-five centuries' worth of jade belts, gold and silver hairpins, jasper earrings, lotus-shaped buttons, and other items used in rituals, burials, and daily life. Through June. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, and Tuesday evenings until 8; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

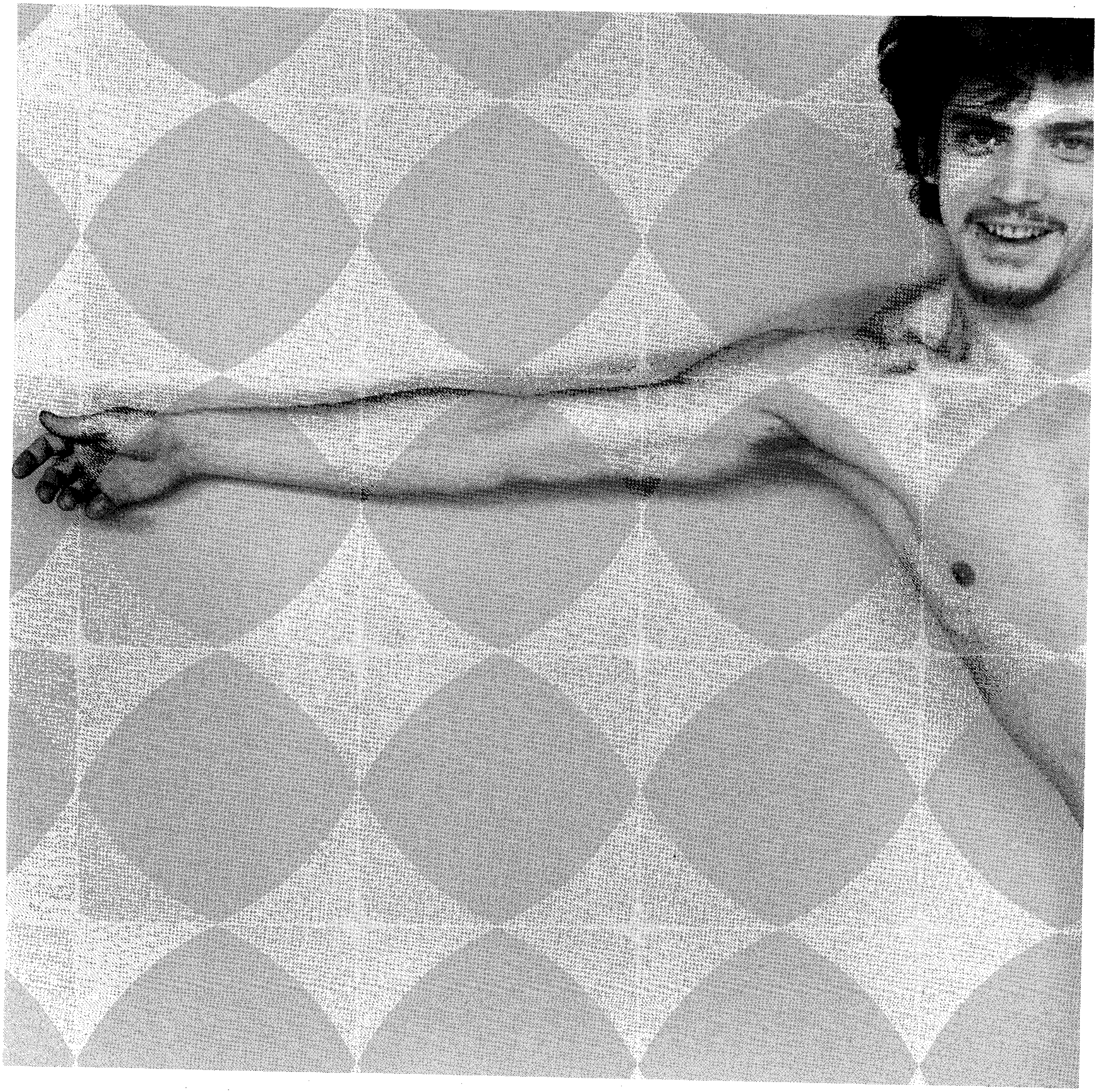
Grolier Club, 47 E. 60th St. (838-6690)—"William Morris: The Collector as Creator." More than a hundred objects, most of them books, reflecting the great Victorian aesthete's wide-ranging interests. Through Feb. 15. (Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway, at Houston St. (966-1313)—"Art That Heals: The Image as Medicine in Ethiopia" and "To Cure and Protect: Sickness and Health in African Art," related exhibitions that include parchment healing scrolls, talismanic paintings by clerics of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, masks, amulets, and divination tools from Zaire, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, and other sub-Saharan countries. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5:30; Saturdays, noon to 8; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (534-1672)—"New York Toy Stories" is a thoroughly delightful collection of some three hundred playthings, both homemade and commercially produced, from the past two centuries. Allow plenty of time, even if you're not taking kids. Through April 27.... ¶ "The Streets and Beyond: New York Photographs" gathers cityscapes and street-life candids of the turn-of-the-century Lower East Side, twenties traffic, the 1939 World's Fair, fifties rooftop views, and more. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. (869-8089)—Part II of "The Hand of the Poet" presents original manuscripts by the likes of Cummings, Moore, Merrill, Auden, Bishop, Lowell, Moss, Nabokov, and Sexton. Through Feb. 15. (Berg Collection.) (Open Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6. The Berg Collection is closed Mondays.)

DOUG ALLEN



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GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, uptown and downtown galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6; Chelsea galleries are generally closed Tuesdays and open Sundays.)

Cho Duck-Hyun—Nine recent works as arresting for their surface beauty as for their unusual contemporary-Confucian sensibility. The enormous re-creations of old-fashioned formal photographs of the artist's family and friends in Korea, meticulously drawn in Conté and pencil on canvas, are as compelling as some of the imaginative installations that incorporate them. In "My Mother 3," an image of Cho's worried but patient-looking mother, in traditional dress with canvas draped over one shoulder, bends to unfurl a piece of actual canvas over the gallery floor. "Manger," in which the two-dimensional face of a baby is swaddled in real canvas and laid in a small hollowed-out and stripped log, evokes a tender spirituality you might have thought impossible to achieve with such minimal materials. Through Feb. 15. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. 752-0124.)

Earl Cunningham (1893-1977)—A willful primitive, originally from Maine, who settled in Florida; his boyish delight in the tropics is fully communicated in these fifty-five small, exuberant works, nearly all of them paintings. The glossy seas and skies are lemon, orchid, or salmon; the trees and bushes bear tiny impastoed blossoms that look like Murano millefiori; the strutting birds flaunt preposterous emerald crests; the fishermen dangle wee catches like red yo-yos; and the effect is utterly endearing. Through March 1. (Beacon Hill Fine Art, 980 Madison Ave., at 67th St. 734-3636.)

Sigmar Polke—Thirty-five drawings and one sculpture ("Potato Machine"), all from the sixties, by the innovative German artist. The offhandedness of the doodlelike works on paper is as pleasing as their nervous energy and low-key impishness—for example, "To Everyone His Own Palm Tree," in which a curvaceous woman walks her dog and struts her stuff under tropical foliage. But the spud device is decidedly the best thing here: you press a button, and a potato suspended on a wire circles its stationary fellow on the floor. Through March 8. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St. 988-1623. Open Mondays.)

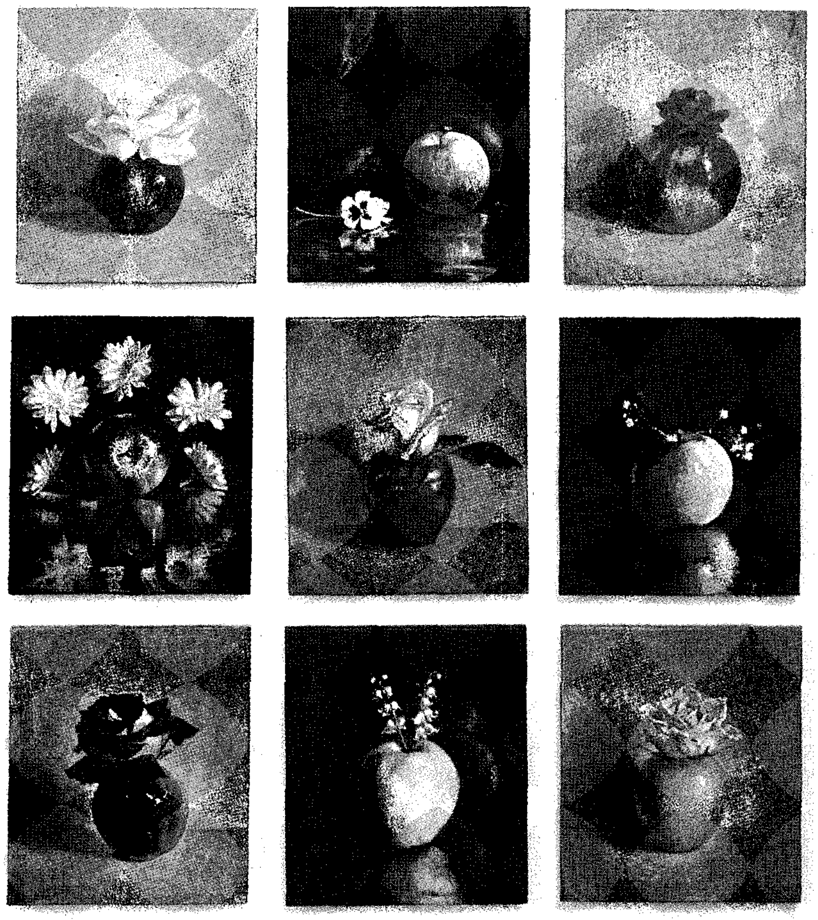
Bill Traylor (1854-1949)—Fifty-six works by an artist, born a slave in Alabama, who was befriended by the white artist Charles Shannon at the age of eighty-five. Using mostly pencil and poster paint on scraps of cardboard, Traylor produced images of vibrant freshness and immediacy, full of virile, rumbustious humor, geniality, and a confidence that, considering his circumstances, seems virtually miraculous. Often they carry symbolic charges: "Man with Basket on Head" (shown with the artist's explanation, "Bird on top of the basket and he don't know it") is a fable in itself. Through March 8. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810.)

Short List—**willem de kooning,** Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. 243-0200. Through March 29. . . . **lois dodd,** Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. 759-2345. Through March 8. . . . **philip geiger,** Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. 664-0907. Through March 1. . . . **duncan grant,** Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. 838-0333. Through March 15. . . . **howard hodgkin,** Sheehan, 20 W. 57th St. 888-4220. Through March 8. . . . **ron schwerin,** Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 988-6870. Through March 15.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Peter Cain (1959-97)—Three large paintings of a sunburned man's head and six smaller Los Angeles industryscapes. The artist's flat poster palette elicits the familiar ache of home videos played on mute; as in his earlier portraits of radically truncated cars, there is a feeling that something is missing, and it's both comical and unsettling. Through March 15. (Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200.)

Rudolf Stingel—New paintings and an installation by the Italian artist. The former are in brilliant Warholian colors against black grounds, while the large-scale installation takes advantage of the architectural drama of Cooper's new space: Stingel has covered much of the gallery floor in staggeringly bright pink-and-red-striped wall-to-wall. Through Feb. 22. (Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 255-1105. Open Tuesdays, closed Sundays.)



THOMAS WOODRUFF: *Apple paintings, at P.P.O.W (532 Broadway, from Feb. 14).*

Doctor of Arts—A year ago, when the painter Thomas Woodruff found himself visiting far too many hospitalized friends, he had what he called "basically, a dumb idea: I'd spend a year wishing people well." The result is "Apple Canon," three hundred and sixty-five portraits of the salubrious fruit in a surprising range of guises: straight on, artfully nibbled, sliced and toothpicked, and so forth. "I went out every day and looked for the best apple, then painted it at the most flattering angle," Woodruff says. "I ended up becoming the society painter for apples." For all the cumulative goofiness (apples in chrysanthemum bonnets, apples suspended on strings like trapeze artists), the magic appears to have worked: the doctor stayed away. "During the project, none of my friends died," Woodruff says. "I was very reluctant to stop painting."

"Three Rooms: Vito Acconci, James Turrell, Gilberto Zorio"—Acconci's utterly uncomfortable pieces give the category "art furniture" a mordant twist; here he contributes a 1992 set—sofa, bed, table, and ladder-back chair (think Mackintosh)—made of aluminum and fluorescent-lighting fixtures. Turrell's "Raethro," a projected-light piece creating the illusion of a three-dimensional pyramid, seems technically sophisticated but rather jejune, until you notice the early date: 1967, the heyday of the dematerialized art object. Zorio, a member of the Italian Arte Povera movement, offers "Star to Purify Words" (1978), a large leather star pierced by an alcohol-filled javelin; it's poetic in a typically go-figure Arte Povera way. Through Feb. 15. (Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 206-9300.)

Short List—**jean-marc bustamante,** Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 243-0200. Through April 19. . . . **alex katz,** Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Through March 16. . . . **kevin landers,** XL, 504 W. 22nd St. 462-4111. Through March 2. . . . **james sadek,** Kravets/Wehby, 529 W. 21st St. 352-2238. Through March 2. . . . **marnie weber,** Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. 633-6555. Through March 2.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Nancy Chunn—"Front Pages: 1996." The artist has taken every front page of the *Times* from last year and altered the images with vivid colors, handwritten commentary, and stamps; arranged chronologically along the gallery walls, they offer a jaundiced review of the year. Chunn has always been committed to political activism, and this is her best show yet. Through Feb. 15. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St. 226-3232.)

Annette Messager—"DépendanceIndépendance (1995-97)," a complex installation by the eminent French artist, incorporating black-and-white photographs and a wide variety of found materials (mirrors, wigs, light bulbs, taxidermy) in assemblages that hang from the ceiling on single lengths of yarn. Although the work has obvious roots in Surrealism, it maintains an up-to-the-minute vibe. Messager isn't afraid to trade in emotion; she self-consciously courts an "incorrect" flavor of sentimentality. Through Feb. 22. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. 228-2828.)

Peter Schlesinger—Eccentric pots whose deliberate awkwardness alienates them from ordinary use; call them Expressionist ce-

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ramics. At the same time, their restrained palette and their decorative motifs recall luxe Orientalia, creating a tension between art and high design. Through March 7. (Aero, 132 Spring St. 966-4700.)

Short List—**marina abramovic,** Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St. 343-2405. Through Feb. 22. . . . **beth b,** Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 343-7300. Through March 8. . . . **sam gant,** American Primitive, 594 Broadway. 966-1530. Through Feb. 22. . . . **kenneth goldsmith,** Bravin Post Lee, 80 Mercer St. 966-2676. Through March 7. . . . **sherry kerlin,** Thorp, 103 Prince St. 431-6880. Through March 1. . . . **kevin larmon,** Marcus, 578 Broadway. 226-3200. Through March 8. . . . **barry le va,** Nolan/Eckman, 560 Broadway. 925-6190. Through March 8. . . . **ken lum,** Rosen, 130 Prince St. 941-0203. Through March 8.

has proven equal to the task. Through Feb. 22. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010.)

"Hope Photographs"—A wide-ranging selection of work by ninety contemporary artists, including Mario Cravo Neto, Flor Garduño, Ernesto Bazan, Andrea Modica, Ann Rhoney, and Mitch Epstein. Through March 1. (National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. 475-3424. Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 11 to 6; Tuesdays, 3 to 6.)

"Zeitgeist Becomes Form: German Fashion Photography, 1945-1995"—Close to two hundred works by thirty-nine photographers, including Regina Relang, Hubs Flöter, F. C. Gundlach, Helmut Newton, Ellen von Unwerth, and Wolfgang Tillmans. Through Feb. 23. (Hearn, 727-7366, and Morris Healy, 243-3753, both at 530 W. 22nd St.)

Short List—**karl blossfeldt,** Petzel, 26 Wooster St. 334-9466. Through March 8. . . . **elinor carucci,** Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St. 780-0071. Through March 8. . . . **konrad cramer,** Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave., at 23rd St. 242-7767. Through March 2. . . . **bruce davidson,** Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. 628-5300. Through Feb. 22. . . . **yasuhiro ishimoto,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. 226-1220. Through Feb. 22. . . . **bill jorden,** SoHo Photo, 15 White St., between West Broadway and Sixth Ave. 226-8571. Open Fridays through Sundays, 1 to 6, and Tuesday evenings from 6 to 8; through March 1. . . . **louise lawler,** Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100. Open Tuesdays, closed Saturdays; through March 15. . . . **david levinthal,** International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Through March 21. Also at Borden, 560 Broadway. 431-0166. Through Feb. 28. . . . **eli reed,** Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051. Opens Saturdays at noon; through March 8. . . . **jörg sasse,** Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. 965-0753. Through March 15. . . . **collier schorr,** 303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121. Through March 9.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Guggenheim Museum and the Museum of the City of New York.)

"Bathing Caps with a White Rim" (1966), by F. C. Gundlach, in "Zeitgeist Becomes Form," at Hearn and Morris Healy.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Adolf Fassbender (1884-1980)—Vintage prints—winter scenes, 1939 World's Fair structures, Venetian gondolas—by a premier second-wave pictorialist. Through Feb. 22. (Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St. 431-0292.)

Kenro Izu—"Light Over Ancient Angkor." The superlative "exquisite" may be overused and misused, but it's the only fit word to describe Izu's photographs of the eighth- to twelfth-century temples at Angkor, in Cambodia. These platinum-palladium contact prints, each made from an enormous fourteen-by-twenty-inch negative, describe towers and terraces, statues and carved reliefs, with a venturesome command of perspective and a poetry that rivals Atget's. When you step back, you discover several pairings of remarkably dissimilar views of the same thing—an enormous tree root, say, or a plaintive four-legged sentinel. The obvious challenge of Angkor Wat, Bayon, and the other Khmer temples lies in capturing their sublime oneness of earth and civilization; from the evidence Izu has brought back from his seven pilgrimages, he

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 875-5050, and for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**le nozze di figaro,** with Kiri Te Kanawa, Heidi Grant Murphy, Susan Graham, Michele Pertusi, and Jeffrey Black; conducted by Leopold Hager. (Feb. 12 at 7:30 and Feb. 15 at 8.) . . . **cavalleria rusticana** and **pagliacci,** with Ghena Dimitrova, Kristján Jóhannsson, and Bruno Pola in the former, and Diana Soviero, Johan Botha, and Juan Pons in the latter; Simone Young conducts both. (Feb. 13 at 8.) . . . **wozzeck,** with Maria Ewing, Falk Struckmann, Mark Baker, Graham Clark, and Michael Devlin; James Levine. (Feb. 14 and Feb. 18 at 8.) . . . **un ballo in maschera,** with Deborah Voigt, Youngok Shin, Barbara Dever, Luciano Pavarotti, and Mr. Pons; Mr. Levine. (Feb. 15 at 1:30.) . . . **aida,** with Sharon Sweet, Stefania Toczyska, Michael Sylvester, and Sherrill Milnes; Adam Fischer. (Feb. 17 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

Amato Opera Company—Opening performances of "Così Fan Tutte," set in the Edwardian era. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Feb. 15 at 7:30 and Feb. 16 at 2:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Yuri Temirkanov conducts Debussy's "Petite Suite" (as orchestrated by Henri-Paul Büsser), Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 1 (with Sarah Chang), and Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Feb. 12-15 at 8.)

Riverside Symphony—Performing Mendelssohn's G-Minor String Symphony, Bartók's Divertimento, and Haflidi Hallgrímsson's "Poemi" (featuring violinist Atle Sponberg). George Rothman conducts. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Feb. 12 at 8.)

Trinity Choir Ensemble and Instrumentalists—Owen Burdick directs Bach's Cantatas No. 22 and No. 159, as well as his motet "Fürchte dich nicht." (Trinity Church, Broadway at Wall St. Feb. 13 at 1. Admission by contribution.)

Little Orchestra Society—Movie scores by Charles Chaplin ("Modern Times"), Erich Wolfgang Korngold ("Kings Row" and "Anthony Adverse"), Elmer Bernstein, Franz Waxman, and Dmitri Tiomkin (among others), introduced by film critics Jeffrey Lyons and Michael Medved. Livia Sohn is the soloist in excerpts from Miklós Rósza's Violin Concerto No. 2. Dino Anagnost conducts. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 13 at 7:30.)

Minnesota Orchestra—Eiji Oue leads Argento's "Valentino Dances," Mozart's C-Major Piano Concerto (K. 467, with Peter Serkin), and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 13 at 8.)

New York Pops—Presenting a Valentine's Day program, with Skitch Henderson on the podium. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 14 at 8.)

Manhattan School of Music Philharmonia—Lawrence Leighton Smith conducts Rachmaninoff's Symphonic Dances, Nicolas Flagello's Concerto Sinfonico for Saxophone Quartet and Orchestra, and Mozart's "Prague" Symphony. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Feb. 14 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Israel Camerata Jerusalem—In its first New York appearance, the chamber orchestra (conducted by Avner Biron) performs Boccherini's D-Minor Symphony ("La Casa del Diavolo"), Mozart's G-Major Piano Concerto (K. 453, with Claude Frank), Puccini's "Crisantemi," Mark Kopytman's "Kaddish," and Schubert's Symphony No. 5. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. Feb. 15 at 8. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

Bolshoi Symphony Orchestra—An all-Russian program, conducted by Peter Feranec, comprises Liadov's "Kikimora," Prokofiev's Sinfonia Concertante (with cellist Alexander Rudin), and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 16 at 2.)

Jupiter Symphony—Jens Nygaard conducts music by Saint-Saëns, including his Cello Concerto No. 2 (featuring Carol Ou) and his "Organ" Symphony (with John Weaver). (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 155 W. 65th St. Feb. 17 at 2 and 7 and Feb. 18 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

Eos Ensemble—The concerto grosso follows a simple method: its several movements employ a divided orchestra in which the textures of a large ensemble (literally, a "concerto grosso") alternate with those of a smaller group (the "concertino"), a disposition that achieved its classic perfection in Arcangelo Corelli's set of twelve concertos, Op. 6, published posthumously in 1714. In Corelli's wake, the form surged in popularity and then, in mid-century, was all but supplanted by the newfangled symphony. But two hundred years later composers of an antiquarian bent began revisiting the concerto grosso. In this program, Jonathan Sheffer leads the seventh concerto, in D Major, from Corelli's collection, as well as twentieth-century examples of the genre by Bloch, Vaughan Williams, Martinů, Schnittke, and Philip Glass. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. Feb. 17 at 8. For information about tickets, call 691-6415.)

Choral Blowout—Thomas Tallis's motet "Spem in alium" is legendary for its forty independent vocal lines, which weave a tapestry of sixteenth-century counterpoint. In this performance, three choral groups—the Choir of St. Ignatius Loyola, the Dessoff Chamber Choir, and the Canticum Sacrum—encircle the audience to perform the work twice, once in its original Latin setting, once in a seventeenth-century English-language version that the ensembles' director, Kent Tritle, came upon in the library of the British Museum. Other a-cappella works, from early organum to modern motets, round out the program. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-2520. Feb. 18 at 8.)

RECITALS

Starting Line—Preliminary auditions for this spring's Van Cliburn International Piano Competition continue, with aspiring pianists performing forty-minute recitals before a jury. (Caspary Auditorium, Rockefeller University, York Ave. at 66th St. Feb. 12-13, from noon to 2:40 and from 8 to 11. No tickets necessary.)

Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio—The ensemble plays piano trios by Brahms (his First) and Tchaikovsky. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Feb. 12 at 8.)

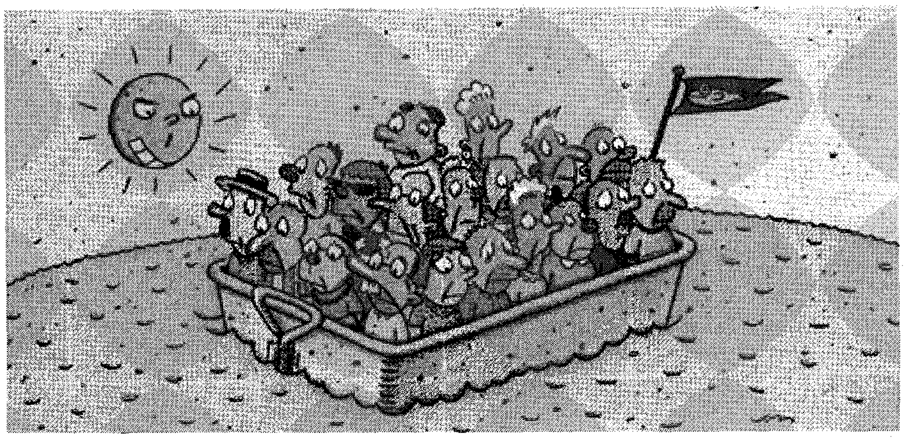
Guarneri Quartet—The foursome plays string quartets by Beethoven (in B-Flat Major, Op. 18, No. 6) and Schubert (the "Death and the Maiden"); violist Ida Kavafian and cellist Peter Wiley assist in Frank Bridge's String Sextet. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 12 at 8.)

Alaria Chamber Ensemble—Violist Mark Peskanov joins the ensemble for a program of chamber music by Haydn, Prokofiev, Matyas Seiber, and Brahms (his C-Minor Piano Quartet). (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 12 at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—An informal, hour-long concert, consisting of Mozart's G-Minor Piano Quartet and Debussy's Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp. (Rose Rehearsal Studio, Rose Building, tenth floor, Lincoln Center. Feb. 13 at 6:45. For information about tickets, call 875-5788.) . . . ¶ Two go-rounds of a family program focussing on Schubert, with baritone Marcus DeLoach and the Borromeo String Quartet. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Feb. 16 at noon and 2.)

Bargemusic—Feb. 13 at 7:30 and Feb. 16 at 4: Violinist Kaori Washiyama and pianist Daniel Shulman perform works by Schubert and Brahms. . . . ¶ Feb. 14 at 6:30: A candlelit dinner concert for Valentine's Day, which includes solo and chamber works by Bach, Rachmaninoff, Schubert, and Schumann; with violinist Carmit Zori, cellist Fred Sherry, and pianist William Wolfram. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

St. Petersburg String Quartet—The ensemble offers quartets by Shostakovich (his Third



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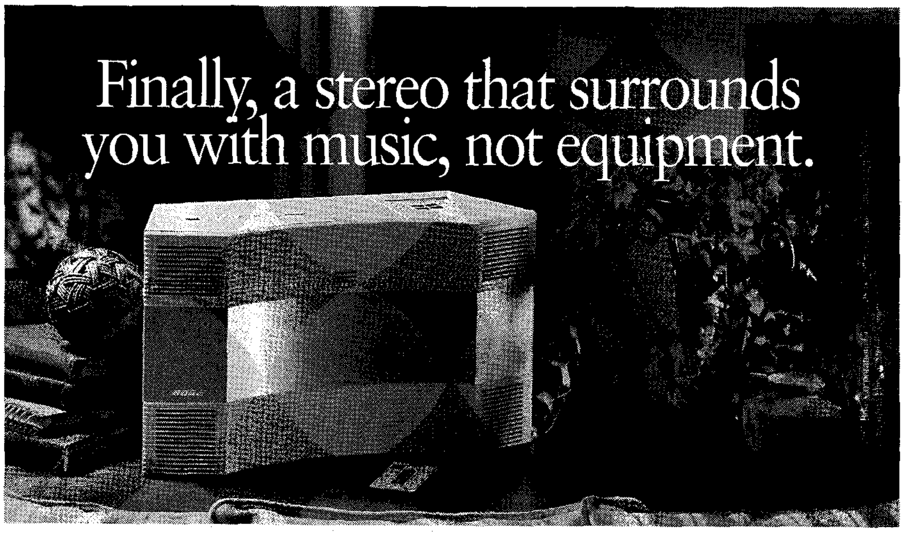
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and Twelfth) and the première of Zurab Nadarejshvili's Piano Quintet (with Justin Blasdale assisting). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Feb. 13 at 8.)

Eliot Fisk—The guitarist performs works by Segovia, Giuliani, Paganini, Rochberg, and others. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. 749-2802, ext. 428. Feb. 13 at 8.)

Judy Dunaway and **Immanuel Davis**—Ms. Dunaway is one of the few performing artists to have dedicated herself to the musical possibilities of balloons. In this concert, she rubs, pinches, squeezes, and punctures them, as members of the Flux Quartet improvise an accompaniment. In the second half of the program, Mr. Davis offers twentieth-century flute works by Carl Vine, George Crumb, and others, with colleagues assisting. (Landon gallery, 1926 Broadway, at 64th St., third floor. 721-8277. Feb. 13 at 8.)

"Le Triomphe de l'Amour"—When it comes to abstract, titillating descriptions of love, nobody has ever topped the Cupid-obsessed French writers and composers of the ancien régime. Harpsichordist James Richman and Baroque-dance specialist Catherine Turocy have been strongly drawn to that period, and in 1995 they were both named chevaliers of the French Order of Arts and Letters for their efforts at promoting French Baroque musical theatre. In this concert they will court one another (as they put it) through their respective arts, with Ms. Turocy tracing the movements of the saraband, the tambourin, and other dances, while Mr. Richman plays selections by two Couperins (Louis and his nephew François), Jean-Henri d'Anglebert, and Rameau. (There's nothing untoward about this public flirtation: Mr. Richman and Ms. Turocy are husband and wife.) (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Feb. 14 at 8.)

Hélène Grimaud—The pianist performs an all-Brahms recital, comprising the Fantasias (Op. 116), the Intermezzos (Op. 117), and the Sonatas No. 2 and No. 3. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 15 at 8.)

All in the Family—Violinist and violist Oleh Krysa, the pianist Tatiana Tchekina (his wife), their violinist son Peter, and cellist Rachel Lewis Krysa (who is married to Peter) perform works by Bach, Pierre Charvet (his "Brandenburg" for Violin and Computer), Milhaud, Volodymyr Huba (his Piano Trio No. 2, written in memory of Shostakovich), and Dvořák (his E-Flat-Major Piano Quartet, Op. 87). (Ukrainian Institute, 2 E. 79th St. 288-8660. Feb. 15 at 8.)

Ruth Ann Swenson—The soprano performs Mozart's concert aria "Misera, dove son?" and songs by Rossini, Verdi, and Schubert (among others); with pianist Warren Jones. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 16 at 2.)

Radu Lupu—The distinguished pianist performs Brahms's Fantasias (Op. 116) and Four Pieces (Op. 119), as well as Beethoven's last two sonatas (in A-Flat Major, Op. 110, and C Minor, Op. 111). (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. Feb. 16 at 3. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

K&K—In this day of music-making, the team of cellist Joel Krosnick and pianist Gilbert Kalish—our town's preëminent practitioners of the doubleheader concert—offer all five of Beethoven's Cello Sonatas, plus Janáček's "Pohádka," Ralph Shapey's "Songs of Life" (with soprano Lisa Saffer), and Robert Stern's "Terezin: Song Cycle Without Words." (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Feb. 16 at 3 and 7:30; a single ticket provides entry to both performances.)

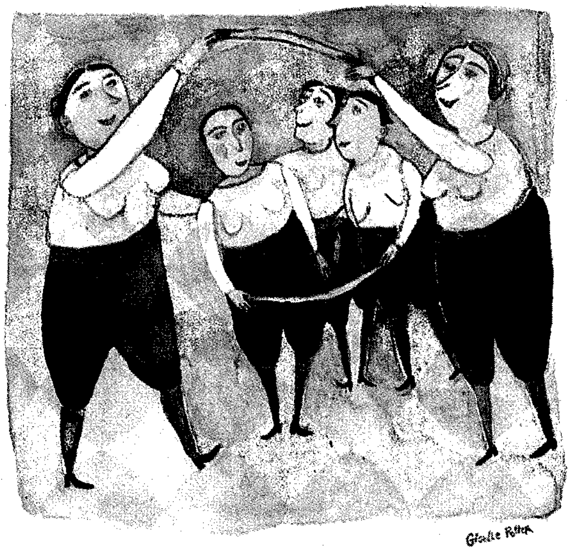
James Morris and Michelle DeYoung—The bass and the mezzo-soprano, assisted by pianist Thomas Bagwell, appear at the Morgan Library, performing songs and arias (by Strauss, Verdi, and others), the manuscripts of which are in the library's collection. (29 E. 36th St. 685-0008. Feb. 16 at 4.)

New York Camerata—The chamber players offer an all-Schubert program that includes his "Trock'ne Blumen" Variations for Flute and Piano, several songs ("Auf dem Strom," with obbligato French horn, among them), and the B-Flat-Major Piano Trio. (St. John's in the Village, 218 W. 11th St., at Waverly Pl. Feb. 16 at 4. For information about tickets, call 866-3459.)

Anne Leahy—The Dublin-based organist performs, among other works, Bach's F-Major Toccata and Fugue, Langlais's "Homage à Frescobaldi," and Franck's Prelude, Fugue, and Variation. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. Feb. 16 at 4. Tickets at the door.)

North/South Consonance—The ensemble presents music by Cowell, Sessions, Thomson, Charles Norman Mason, Eleanor Cory, Magnus Andersson, George Green, Max Lifchitz, and Nils Vigeland (who also conducts). (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Feb. 16 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

Jehan Alain Festival—The career of Jehan Alain (1911-40) was cut tragically short when he fell in action near Saumur. The son of an organist, he shone at the Paris Conservatoire, excelling not only in organ but also in composition (thanks largely to the instruction of Paul Dukas). His modest catalogue of works exhibits a tendency toward mobile, fleeting themes and a constant and captivating flux of emotion. Fortunately for us, his younger sister, the brilliant organist Marie-Claire Alain, made it her mission to champion his music, and her enthusiasm convinced others to stake a place in the repertoire for several of his pieces. On February 17, his life and works will be the subject of a daylong celebration, including performance-lectures on the composer's piano music (presented by Kenneth Huber, at 2) and on his Trois Danses, from 1937-39 (with organist Joan Lippincott, at 3), as well as a recital by James Higdon (at 8) of organ works by Alain and his contemporaries Maurice Duruflé and Charles Tournemire. (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. For a detailed schedule and information about tickets to all events, call 289-4100.)



This weekend: sword dancers take the city.

GISELLE POTTER

Yayoi Toda—In her New York début recital, the winner of the 1993 Queen Elisabeth of Belgium International Violin Competition performs sonatas by Beethoven (in G Major, Op. 30, No. 3), Enescu, and Ysaÿe, among other works; with pianist Rohan De Silva. Presented by Young Concert Artists. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Feb. 18 at 8.)

ALSO OF INTEREST

THOMAS PIERCY AND JUDITH OLSON: Clarinettist and pianist. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. Feb. 13 at 8. Tickets at the door.) . . . **GREGG SMITH SINGERS.** (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Feb. 15 at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-2990.) . . . **YAEL WEISS** and **YURI KIM:** Pianists, each offering half a recital. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. Feb. 16 at noon.) . . . **MUSICIANS FROM MARLBORO.** (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5689. Feb. 16 at 2.) . . . **MATTHEW REICHERT:** Violinist, performing music by Stravinsky, Franck, and others. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-2200. Feb. 16 at 2.) . . . **AVNER ARAD:** Pianist, in works by Mozart, Schubert, and Liszt. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Feb. 16 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.) . . . **NEW YORK WIND SOLOISTS.** (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122th St. Feb. 16 at 7. No tickets necessary.) . . . **NINA BOESEN:** Violinist, with pianist Ilan Rechtman, performing sonatas by Brahms and Mozart. (Mansfield Hotel, 12 W. 44th St. Feb. 17 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

The Sharper Image—When the women of the New York City-based Half Moon Sword dance team take in hand three-foot-long slabs of polished steel and break into their routines, they are continuing an ancient tradition from the coal-mining regions of Northern England. This weekend they'll be joined by twelve other groups from across the United States and Canada for the twelfth annual winter festival of sword dancing. On Feb. 15-16 the troupes perform in various combinations in public spaces, libraries, and churches around the city. All thirteen appear together on Feb. 15 (at 9:30, at the Port Authority Bus Terminal, Eighth Ave. and 42nd St., and at 4:30, at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, South St.) and on Feb. 16 (at 2:30, at the Picnic House in Prospect Park, Brooklyn). For information about other venues, call 718-469-5015.

Valentine's Week Options—For evening people: Roger Angell introduces Alec Baldwin, Anne Jackson, Eli Wallach, and Lillo Way in a reading of selections from "Nothing But You: Love Stories from *The New Yorker*." (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Feb. 12 at 6:30.) . . . ¶ For morning people: Writers Amy Bloom, Elizabeth Berg, Erica Jong, and others talk about love, in a literary breakfast moderated by Random House publisher Harold Evans. (Fred's, at Barneys, 10 E. 61st St. Feb. 13 at 8:30 A.M. For reservations, call 940-7480.) . . . ¶ For unattached people: Robin Gorman Newman highlights particularly useful passages of her guide "How to Meet a Mensch in New York." (Barnes & Noble, Sixth Ave. at 21st St. Feb. 13 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ For sports people: The Harlem Globetrotters hold court at Madison Square Garden on Feb. 16 at 7. (465-6741.)

More Readings—Feb. 12 at 7: Novelists Patrick McGrath, Mary Gaitskill, and Jeffrey Eugenides read from their latest works. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Tickets at the door.) . . . ¶ Feb. 12 at 8: Ira Cohen joins Gerard Malanga in a reading of their poems. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door.) . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 6:30: John Guare, Cynthia Ozick, Mark Rudman, and others read satirical pieces by St. Petersburg authors. (Stuyvesant High School Theatre, 345 Chambers St., at West St. No tickets necessary.)

Walk—Feb. 14 at 12:30: Architectural historian Francis Morrone leads a Municipal Art Society tour of the Manhattan streets frequented by the turn-of-the-century architect and playboy Stanford White. (For more information, call 935-3960.)

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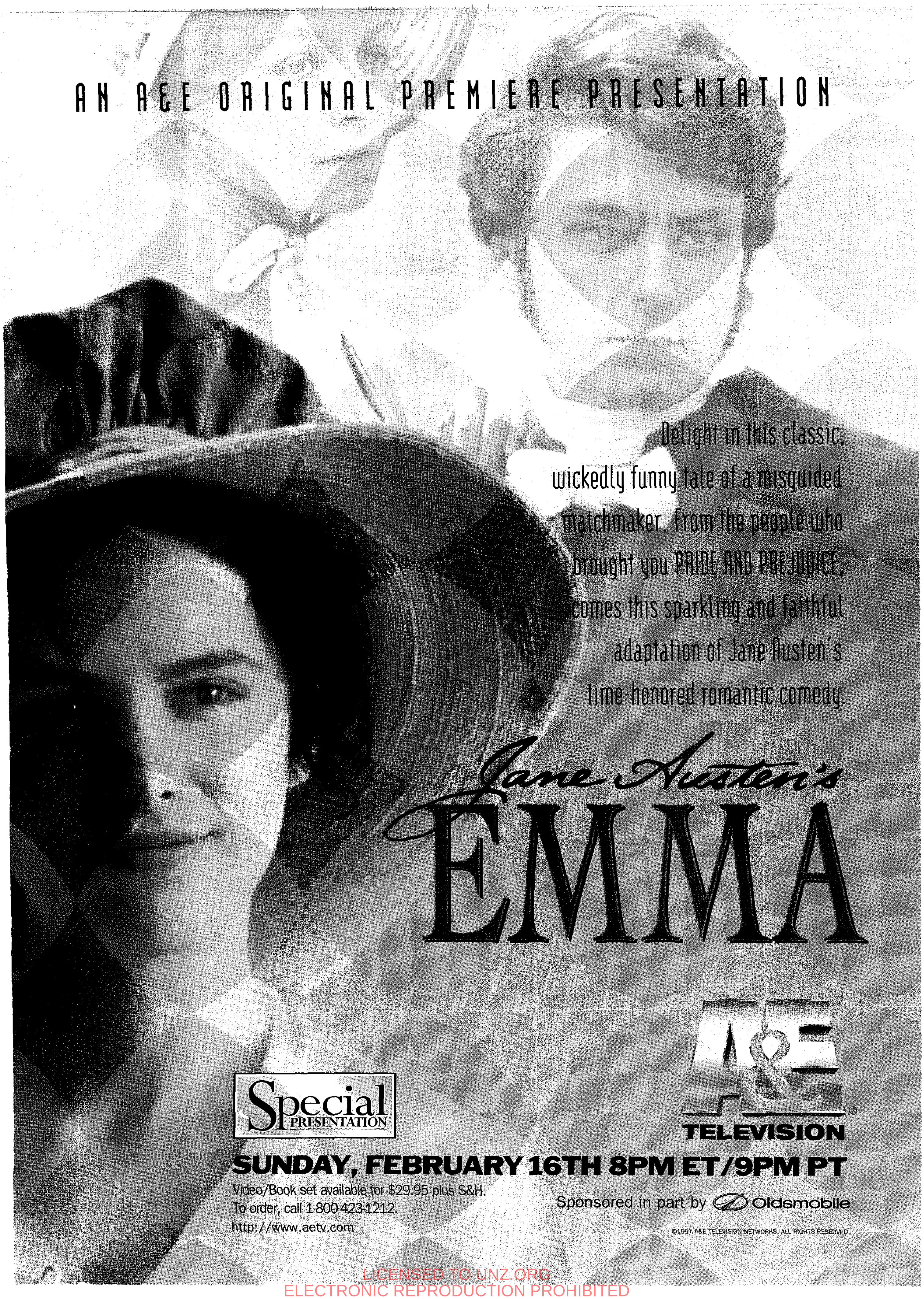

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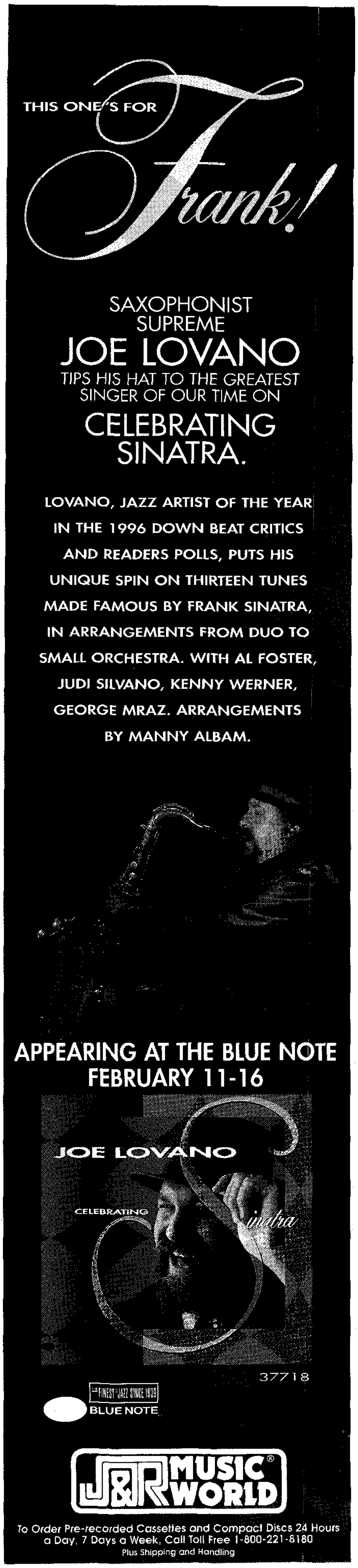
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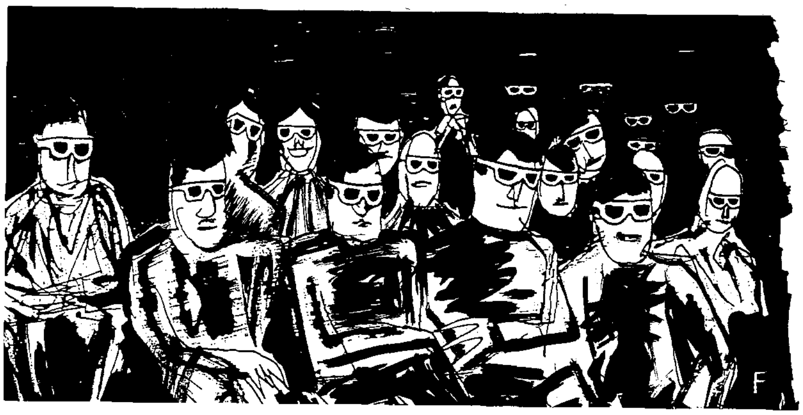


THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Absolute Power—A thriller about political intrigue and murder in Washington, D.C., starring Clint Eastwood (who also directed), Gene Hackman, Scott Glenn, Judy Davis, and Ed Harris. Written by William Goldman. Opening Feb. 14. (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

Cyclo—The adventures of a bicycle-taxi driver (Le Van Loc) in Ho Chi Minh City. Written and directed by Tran Anh Hung. In Vietnamese. Opening Feb. 12. (Film Forum.)

Dangerous Ground—Ice Cube, Elizabeth Hurley, and Ving Rhames star in a drama about drugs and crime in contemporary South Africa. Co-written (with Greg Latter) and directed by Darrell Roodt. Opening Feb. 12. (84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas.)

Fools Rush In—Matthew Perry and Salma Hayek are mismatched lovers who marry after their first date, in a romantic comedy directed by Andy Tennant. Opening Feb. 14. (Cinema I, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, State, and Village East Cinemas.)

That Darn Cat—A remake of the 1965 Disney comedy about a cat and a kidnapping. With Christina Ricci and Doug E. Doug. Directed by Bob Spiers. Opening Feb. 14. (Embassy 4.)

Touch—When his power to heal with his touch becomes public knowledge, a former monk (Skeet Ulrich) finds his life filled with believers, doubters, and exploiters. Paul Schrader wrote and directed, from Elmore Leonard's 1987 novel. With Bridget Fonda, Christopher Walken, Tom Arnold, and Lolita Davidovich. Opening Feb. 14. (First & 62nd Cinemas and Lincoln Square.)

Vegas Vacation—Chevy Chase and Beverly D'Angelo embark on another adventure-filled family vacation, in a comedy written by Elisa Bell and directed by Stephen Keeler. Opening Feb. 14.

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, and Terrence Rafferty. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre information is listed on page 28.)

La Cérémonie—Jean-Pierre Cassel and Jacqueline Bisset hire the taciturn Sandrine Bonnaire as their new maid; she teams up with the local postmistress (Isabelle Huppert), and together they work themselves into a malignant fury. Director Claude Chabrol's skill is not in doubt here, but his film, adapted from a Ruth Rendell novel, is surprisingly weak on motive and continuity. In French.—A.L. (1/20/97) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

The English Patient—Written and directed by Anthony Minghella, from the novel by Michael Ondaatje, this long and searching movie tangles together a number of stories and characters: Almásy (Ralph Fiennes) and Katharine (Kristin Scott Thomas), who have an affair in North Africa before the Second World War; a French-Canadian nurse (Juliette Binoche) who cares for the badly burned Almásy after the war, and the Sikh soldier (Naveen Andrews) *she* has an affair with; and the mysterious Caravaggio (Willem Dafoe), a scavenging thief who appears to know the secrets of Almásy's past. The triumph of the film lies not just in the force and range of the performances but in Minghella's creation of an intimate epic: vast landscapes mingle with the minute details of desire, and the combination is transfixing.—A.L. (11/25/96) (Chelsea Cinemas, Embassy 3, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, New York Twin, and Village East Cinemas.)

Everyone Says I Love You—Woody Allen's latest movie is one of his frothiest, and weirdest, to date: a throwback picture that tries to resurrect the spirit of thirties musicals without recourse to irony. There is a deliberate roughness to both the singing (which is kind of charming) and the choreography (which is unwieldy and a little graceless). The all-star cast includes Julia Roberts, Tim Roth, Drew Barrymore, and Alan Alda. You emerge bemused but undeniably cheered up, partly because of the uncomplicated magic of the climax, in which Allen dances with an airborne Goldie Hawn on the bank of the Seine.—A.L. (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, 34th St. East, and Village East Cinemas.)

Evita—At last, the rock opera by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice comes to the screen. The problem is that it remains a rock opera by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice. The fact that it's almost bereft of spoken dialogue is good news for Madonna, who, as Eva Perón, is barely required to speak or even to act. Jonathan Pryce is a sly and troubled Juan Perón, and Antonio Banderas prowls through the action as our friendly smoldering narrator. Alan Parker's picture blares and blazes at you without letup, and it works best when it's openly theatrical—only when it's over do you sense how little lay beneath the busy surface.—A.L. (1/6/97) (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema II, 86th Street East Twin, Guild, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII.)

Fierce Creatures—The cast of "A Fish Called Wanda" in a movie about a small English zoo swallowed up by a grand corporation. John Cleese is the new boss, who at first appears to be a nasty piece of work but is soon revealed in kinder colors; the villains, a crass Australian tycoon and his wretched son, are both played by Kevin Kline; and Jamie Lee Curtis has a curious role that reduces her to almost nothing but her bosom. Everything about the film feels so musty and antique—flatulence, underwear, gorillas—that you can't even work up the energy to be offended. It was directed by Robert Young *and* Fred Schepisi, who together make a handsome hash of things: characters float through with only the flimsiest gestures toward continuity, and Cleese is never allowed to let rip. The plot depends on a plan to market the fluffiest creatures in the zoo as untamed flesh-eaters, which seems horribly apposite: this is a picture that dreams of comic bite but has no teeth.—A.L. (2/3/97) (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea

Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, National Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and 34th Street Showplace.)

Gridlock'd—Tupac Shakur and Tim Roth team up in a junkie comedy that, while not quite as stylish as "Trainspotting," has a good deal in common with its hip, downbeat humor. As the two addicts tool around together, trying to kick their habits, they're embroiled in a series of misunderstandings and branded as killers; they also develop an infectious camaraderie. Vondie Curtis Hall, who wrote and directed, draws the comedy from the situations rather than from the banter and putdowns that pass for wit in most buddy pictures. And the cinematographer, Bill Pope, has given Detroit, where the movie was shot, a desperate, candy-wrappers-in-a-garbage-barrel urban beauty.—B.D. (Astor Plaza, 84th Street Sixplex, Manhattan Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

Hamlet—Kenneth Branagh's film uses the full text of the play (the running time is nearly four hours), it's shot in 70 mm., and the approach is daringly straightforward. The director himself plays the unhappy Prince, and so lucidly that every shift in the volatile character's mood seems perfectly natural. Derek Jacobi, as Claudius, and Julie Christie, as Gertrude, are also superb. Also with Richard Briers (Polonius) and Kate Winslet (Ophelia).—T.R. (1/13/97) (Paris.)

In Love and War—Richard Attenborough's dopey epic follows the young Ernest Hemingway (Chris O'Donnell) as he fights and flirts his way around Northern Italy at the end of the First World War. Wounded in the course of heroic action at the front, he wakes up to find himself being tended by Agnes (Sandra Bullock); they embark on a love affair so intense and passionate that the audience soon slips under the ether, never to emerge. The film yearns after grandeur but stumbles around in circles under hazy light. None of the actors take hold, and Attenborough fails to recapture the severe mood of doomed and determined love which lent such punch to his 1993 "Shadowlands." The picture's only hope is that the miscasting may yet give it cult status. If O'Donnell can play Hemingway, what are the odds on Whoopi Goldberg's showing us the funny side of Emily Dickinson?—A.L. (2/3/97) (Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

Jerry Maguire—Tom Cruise plays the title character, who is a glib, cocky agent for professional athletes. In the fluid opening scenes, the movie, which was written and directed by Cameron Crowe, promises to be something unusual—a comedy about the spiritual crisis of a shallow man. But the star quickly reverts to his familiar feisty, can-do shtick, and Crowe loses control of the fragile comic tone. Also with Renée Zellweger, Cuba Gooding, Jr., and Bonnie Hunt.—T.R. (12/16/96) (Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

Marvin's Room—Jerry Zaks's strength-through-illness drama, adapted by the late Scott McPherson from his 1990 play. Bessie (Diane Keaton), who spends her time caring for her bedridden father (Hume Cronyn), discovers that she herself has leukemia; the search for a bone-marrow donor leads her to her sister, Lee (Meryl Streep), whom she hasn't seen in twenty years. Both women give it all they've got, but this cloying film doesn't deserve their generosity. Leonardo DiCaprio is highly convincing as Lee's dysfunctional son.—A.L. (1/20/97) (19th Street East 6, Regency, 68th St. Playhouse, and Village East Cinemas.)

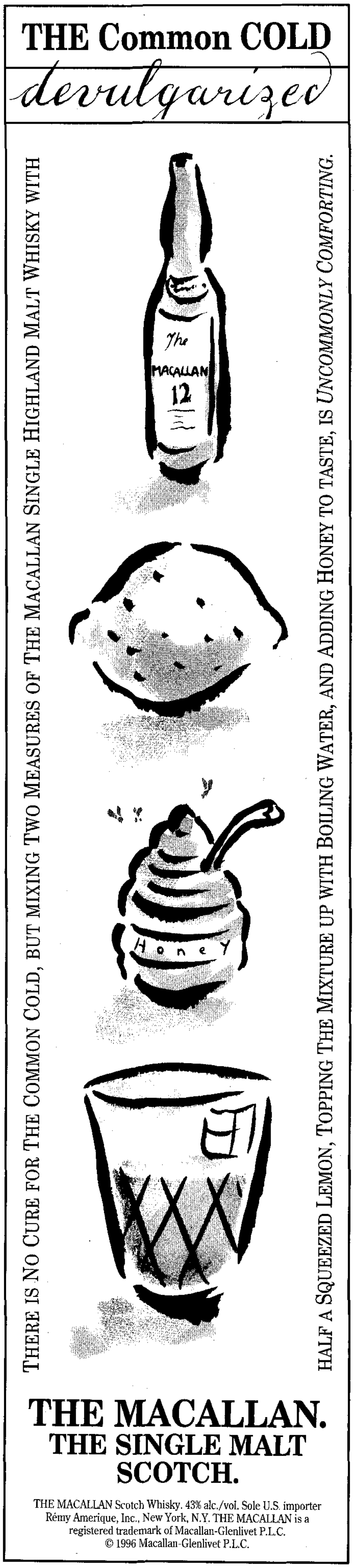
Mother—Albert Brooks directed, co-wrote (with Monica Johnson), and stars in this comedy, about a writer who's had problems with women and moves back in with his befuddled mother (Debbie Reynolds) in order to discover where he went wrong. The film flounders around trying to make tired points; Brooks gets his fair share of funny asides, but he goes beyond his usual subversive whininess into mean-spirited crankiness—and a lack of generosity is fatal for a comedy that's meant to charm.—B.D. (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.)

Nightjohn—Sarny (Allison Jones), the twelve-year-old heroine and narrator of Charles Burnett's luminous film, is a slave on a Southern plantation, and the story she has to tell is simple and momentous: it's about how she learned to read and write. Her tutor is a mature, well-travelled slave whom she calls Nightjohn (Carl Lumbly). Because literacy is a punishable offense for the slaves, Sarny's education is an underground activity, clandestine and nocturnal; learning has rarely seemed so risky, or so essential, as it does here. The movie is genuinely uplifting, but no more uplifting than the brutal facts of history will allow, and at the climax Burnett produces an extraordinarily complex emotional effect: we feel both the joy of the young heroine's accomplishment and a melancholy awareness of how terrible it is that so little should seem like so much. Also with Beau Bridges, Lorraine Toussaint, and Bill Cobbs. The script, by Bill Cain, is based on a young-adult novel by Gary Paulsen.—T.R. (2/10/97) (Walter Reade Theatre; Feb. 12-13.)

Lolita Davidovich and Skeet Ulrich in "Touch."

MARK ZINGARELLI

The People vs. Larry Flynt—Milos Forman's film chronicles the sexual adventures, medical travails, and legal battles of Larry Flynt (Woody Harrelson)—the creator of the unprecedentedly crude skin magazine *Hustler*—and his raunchy wife, Althea (Courtney Love). For an hour or so, it's a cheerful and unpretentious picaresque comedy, but it turns sentimental and smugly high-minded in its second half: having gone to great lengths to humanize its disreputable hero and heroine, the movie then makes the mistake of



THE Common COLD

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THERE IS NO CURE FOR THE COMMON COLD, BUT MIXING TWO MEASURES OF THE MACALLAN SINGLE HIGHLAND MALT WHISKY WITH HALF A SQUEEZED LEMON, TOPPING THE MIXTURE UP WITH BOILING WATER, AND ADDING HONEY TO TASTE, IS *UNCOMMONLY COMFORTING.*

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trying to canonize them.—T.R. (1/13/97) (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 64th and 2nd, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Relic—A strongly produced monster movie (by "Terminator" producer Gale Anne Hurd), with some swanky cinematography by its director, Peter Hyams. While the acting barely registers (Tom Sizemore and Penelope Ann Miller are the stars), the relentless pacing and the paint-by-numbers plot (a monster is loose in a Chicago natural-history museum) give the audience some no-brainer bang for its buck.—B.D. (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Metro Cinema, Orpheum VII, State, and 34th Street Showplace.)

Scream—An entertaining horror comedy in which the director Wes Craven and his scriptwriter, Kevin Williamson, take the clichés of fright films and reinvigorate them with a cheeky knowingness: the victims are horror-movie aficionados who in many instances make the same mistakes they've joked about seeing made on screen. With help from an unusually strong cast—Drew Barrymore, Neve Campbell, Courteney Cox, and David Arquette all do smashing work—Craven wrings some real thrills from the familiar perils of all those teen-age gorefests.—B.D. (Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and State.)

Suburbia—The screenwriter, Eric Bogosian, and the director, Richard Linklater, work hard at transforming Bogosian's 1994 play about restless youth into something resembling a movie: the film seems intended as a kind of anti-"American Graffiti," with a forlorn convenience store substituted for the bright, bustling teen hangout Mel's Drive-In, and with cynicism substituted for nostalgia. The director's naturalistic style opens up the action without, however, expanding the writer's narrow, mean-spirited view of the characters. With Giovanni Ribisi, Amie Carey, Steve Zahn, Nicky Katt, Jayce Bartok, Dina Spybey, and Parker Posey.—T.R. (2/10/97) (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Waiting for Guffman—If talent were enough, Christopher Guest's mock documentary about a small Missouri town celebrating its sesquicentennial would be one of the great recent comedies. Along with Guest, it stars such masterly offbeat character actors as Eugene Levy, Catherine O'Hara, and Bob Balaban, and it's full of quick gestures and throwaway lines that would be brilliant and memorable anywhere else. But satire at this length needs a fresher, fairer target than pathetic small-town piety. Guest and Levy, the co-writers, seem to have had nothing in mind beyond the kind of characters they could work up, and while *they're* clearly having fun, for us the result is something like watching children at play in a sandbox. And, without any check on their instincts, the actors often fall back on meanness; Guest's Corky St. Clair, the closeted but obviously gay high-school drama teacher, is a particularly tasteless (and dated) invention. With Parker Posey and Fred Willard.—S.K. (Angelika Film Center and Cinema 3rd Avenue.)

When We Were Kings—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Lincoln Square; starting Feb. 14.)

ALSO PLAYING

ANGEL BABY: Carnegie Hall Cinemas. . . . **THE BEAUTICIAN AND THE BEAST:** East 85th Street, Embassy 2, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, and Waverly. . . . **BEVERLY HILLS NINJA:** Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, 64th and 2nd, and 34th Street Showplace. . . . **BIG NIGHT** (reviewed in our issue of 9/23/96): Cinema 3. . . . **BREAKING THE WAVES** (11/18/96): Angelika Film Center and Eastside Playhouse. . . . **CITIZEN RUTH:** Angelika 57 and The Screening Room. . . . **DANTE'S PEAK:** Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet, 84th Street Sixplex, National Twin, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Waverly. . . . **FARMER & CHASE:** Gotham Cinema. . . . **JOHNS:** Carnegie Hall Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . . **KOLYA:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **LOOKING FOR RICHARD:** 59th Street East Cinema and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **MARGARET'S MUSEUM:** Quad Cinema. . . . **MEET WALLY SPARKS:** First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, State, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **METRO:** Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Embassy 1, Orpheum VII, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **THE PEST:** Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY** (1/6/97): First & 62nd Cinemas and Village Theatre VII. . . . **PRISONER OF THE MOUNTAINS:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **RIDICULE:** Angelika 57. . . . **SECRETS & LIES:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **SHINE** (12/2/96): Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, Lincoln Square, and Murray Hill Cinemas. . . . **SLING BLADE:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT** (12/9/96): Criterion Center. . . . **SWINGERS:** The Screening Room. . . . **THIEVES (LES VOLEURS):** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th St.
Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Baronet, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, Seventh Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Coronet, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy I, Broadway at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Manhattan Twin, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Metro Cinema I and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
National Twin, Broadway at 44th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St.
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
68th St. Playhouse, Third Ave. at 68th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton I and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly I and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

The Connection (1961)—Adapted by Jack Gelber from his play, and directed by Shirley Clarke, the film became famous because of its four-letter-word censorship troubles. A group of addicts in a New York flat wait for the pusher; a documentary-film director (William Redfield) and his cameraman are also in the apartment, making a film of the addicts, and thus "The Connection" tries to be a comment on the relationship of artist and subject, as well as on addiction. It's painfully obvious that the dialogue is dramatic writing, and there are characters (such as a Salvation Army sister) who carry a whiff of antique dramaturgy. The music includes jazz by Freddie Redd, who is on camera, along with his group, among the addicts.—P.K. (Anthology Film Archives; Feb. 12.)

8½ (1963)—Fellini's celebrated autobiographical phantasmagoria. Guido (Marcello Mastroianni), the director-hero, is the center of the film's universe, the creator on whose word everything waits, the man sought after by everyone. He can do anything, and the possibilities confuse him. The multi-ringed circus of "8½" is such a luxuriously externalized version of an artist's inner life that it's more like the fantasy of someone who wishes that he were a movie director—someone who has soaked up those movie versions of an artist's life, in which in the midst of a carnival or a ball the hero receives inspiration and dashes away to transmute life into art. It's a de-luxe glorification of creative crisis, visually arresting (the dark and light contrasts are extraordinary, magical) but in some essential way conventional-minded. The cast includes Anouk Aimée, Sandra Milo, Claudia Cardinale, and Barbara Steele. The score is by Nino Rota. In Italian.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Feb. 14 and Feb. 17-18.)

The Graduate (1967)—Dustin Hoffman plays Benjamin Braddock, who returns to his swank L.A. home after graduating from college, and feels alienated from his insensitive, self-indulgent parents and their whole set of lewd, money-making friends. As Mrs. Robinson, Anne Bancroft is tremendous fun, at first; she's the amusingly voracious middle-aged woman who seduces the naïve Benjamin. But then he falls in love with Mrs. Robinson's fresh, wide-eyed daughter (Katharine Ross), and the mother is turned into a vindictive witch. (And the comedy turns into melodrama.) Commercially, this worked: the rejection of upper-middle-class values had a special appeal for upper-middle-class college students, and this "generation gap" view of youth and age entered the national bloodstream. Mike Nichols directed.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; starting Feb. 14.)

Marlowe (1969)—As Raymond Chandler's detective, in this adaptation of "The Little Sister," James Garner doesn't disgrace himself, but the film, directed by Paul Bogart, doesn't stay with you in the way that most of the Philip Marlowe pictures do. It just doesn't have much personality. The script, by Stirling Silliphant, is no help. With Gayle Hunnicutt, Carroll O'Connor, Rita Moreno, Bruce Lee, Sharon Farrell, William Daniels, and Jackie Coogan.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Feb. 12-13.)

Peeping Tom (1960)—For connoisseurs of repellent cinema. There's never been a psycho thriller as insidiously skin-crawling as Michael Powell's portrait of a would-be director as a serial killer. Carl Boehm is the title creep, a focus-puller at a London movie studio who moonlights as a pornographic still-photographer and spends his spare time shooting a documentary about murder, starring his victims. The movie has its witty moments, but it isn't a black comedy—it's an obsessive-compulsive nightmare.—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; Feb. 14-15.)

Que Viva Mexico! (1940)—The only film that Eisenstein directed outside the Soviet Union was never completed. But out of the fabulous footage that he and his cinematographer, Eduard Tissé, shot in Mexico in 1930 and 1931 the film "Que Viva Mexico!" was edited by his disciples, who attempted to approximate his original plan—from Aztec cults through conquistadores and peonage to Christian feasts. The footage imposes its vision of the Indian faces and the Mexican landscape; these faces are perhaps too noble and eternal, but they are marvellous to look at.—P.K. (Anthology Film Archives; Feb. 18.)

Star Wars (1977)—The loudness, the smash-and-grab editing, and the relentless pacing drive every idea from your head, and even if you've been entertained, you may feel cheated of some dimension—a sense of wonder, perhaps. It's an epic without a dream. Maybe the only real inspiration involved was to set its sci-fi galaxy in the pop-culture past, and to turn old-movie ineptness into conscious Pop art. The writer and director, George Lucas, has got the tone of bad movies down pat: you never catch the actors deliberately acting badly; they just seem to be bad actors, on contract to Monogram or Republic, their klunky enthusiasm polished at the Ricky Nelson school of acting. With Carrie Fisher as the princess-in-distress who talks tomboy-tough, Mark Hamill as Luke Skywalker, Harrison Ford as Han Solo, and Alec Guinness as Ben Obi-Wan Kenobi.—P.K. (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea West, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Ziegfeld.)

The Way We Were (1973)—Robert Redford is a straw-haired jock from Virginia who wants to have a good time, and Barbra Streisand is a frizzy-haired Communist who's always sure she's right. The picture has some atrocious sequences set in Hollywood during the black-listing troubles, but the romantic star chemistry of Redford and Streisand turns a half-terrible movie into hit entertainment—maybe even memorable entertainment. Sydney Pollack directed.—P.K. (A Different Light Bookstore; Feb. 16.)

Wild at Heart (1990)—The novel by Barry Gifford on which the writer-director David Lynch based his screenplay is a languorous, arty trifle about a pair of lovers named Sailor (Nicolas Cage) and Lula (Laura Dern), who drive from North Carolina to Texas and stop at ratty hotels and motels along the way. Their happiness is threatened by a variety of kinky villains, mostly of Lynch's invention: Gifford's poky Deep South odyssey is now an orgy of evil, full of graphic violence and grotesque craziness. The lurid villainy always seems diversionary, a baroque disguise for a bland, lifeless, and overfamiliar story. The movie is one startling lapse of taste after another; it's a sorry spectacle.—T.R. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Feb. 15.)

Opening February 14 at Film Forum, Le Van Loc in Tran Anh Hung's "Cyclo."

HIROSHI TANABE

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2 and 3, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—**theatre 2:** Feb. 12-13: "The Long Goodbye" (1973, Robert Altman) and "Marlowe" (†). . . . From Feb. 14: "The Graduate" (†). . . . **theatre 3:** "The Big Sleep" (1945, Howard Hawks), "Walkabout" (1971, Nicolas Roeg), and "Microcosmos" (1996, Claude Nuridsany and Marie Pérennou).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of films by Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German, most with English subtitles. Feb. 13 at 2:30 and Feb. 16 at 5: "Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven" (1975). . . . Feb. 13 at 6: "Bremen Freedom" (1972). . . . Feb. 13 at 8: "Effi Briest" (1974). . . . Feb. 14 at 2:30 and Feb. 15 at 5: "Fear of Fear" (1975). . . . Feb. 14 at 6: "Ali: Fear Eats the Soul" (1973). . . . Feb. 14 at 8 and Feb. 16 at 2: "Fox and His Friends" (1974). . . . Feb. 15 and Feb. 17 at 2: "I Only Want You to Love Me" (1975). . . . Feb. 17 at 5 and Feb. 18 at 2:30: "Satan's Brew" (1976). . . . Feb. 18 at 6: "Chinese Roulette" (1976) . . . . ¶ A selection of films admired by Fassbinder. Feb. 14 at 3 and Feb. 15 at 5: "Peeping Tom" (†). . . . Feb. 14 at 7, Feb. 17 at 2, and Feb. 18 at 3: "8½" (†). . . . Feb. 15 at 2:30 and Feb. 16-17 at 5: "The First Legion" (1951, Douglas Sirk), with Charles Boyer. . . . Feb. 16 at 2:30: "The Servant" (1963, Joseph Losey). . . . ¶ Feb. 13 at 3 and 6: "The Women Outside" (1995, J. T. Takagi and Hye Jung Park).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A program of films directed by Charles Burnett. Feb. 12 at 2, 4, and 6:15: "To Sleep with Anger" (1990). . . . Feb. 12 at 8:15 and Feb. 13 at 8:45: "Nightjohn" (see the review under Current Films). . . . Feb. 13 at 2, 4:15, and 6:30: "The Glass Shield" (1995). . . . ¶ A program of films by Raúl Ruíz. Feb. 14 at 2 and 6:40, Feb. 15 at 4 and 8:15, Feb. 16 at 4 and 8:45, and Feb. 17 at 8:45: "Fado Major and Minor" (1996). . . . Feb. 14 at 4:15 and 9, Feb. 16 at 6:15, and Feb. 17 at 2 and 6:15: "The Three Crowns of the Sailor" (1982). . . . Feb. 15 at 6:15 and Feb. 17 at 4:15: "Hypothesis of a Stolen Painting" (1978) and "Snakes and Ladders" (1980). . . . ¶ Feb. 15-16 at 2: "Where Do We Go from Here?" (1945, Gregory Ratoff).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A program of films by or about David Lynch. Feb. 15 at 2: "Pretty as a Picture: The Art of David Lynch" (1997, Toby Keeler). . . . Feb. 15 at 4:30: "Wild at Heart" (†). . . . In the Nam June Paik Video Viewing Room, the episodes of "Twin Peaks" which Lynch himself directed are being shown. Through Feb. 14: Episode 8. . . . From Feb. 15: Episode 9.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St.—Feb. 13 at 7:30: "Under the Domim Tree" (1995, Eli Cohen; in Hebrew). For information about free tickets, call 687-9141. . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Celestial Clockwork" (1995, Fina Torres; in French and Spanish), with Adriana Gil. For information, call 355-6160.

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—Feb. 18 at 7: "A Woman Is a Woman" (1960, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Jean-Paul Belmondo and Anna Karina. . . . Feb. 18 at 9: "Boudu Saved from Drowning" (1932, Jean Renoir; in French), with Michel Simon.

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—Feb. 12 at 7: "Rome Is Burning: Shirley Clarke: A Portrait" (1970, Noel Burch and André S. Labarthe) and "The Connection" (†). . . . ¶ A program of films by or about Andrei Tarkovsky. Feb. 12 at 8 and 10: "My Name Is Ivan" (1962). . . . Feb. 13 at 8: "The Sacrifice" (1986). . . . Feb. 14 at 8: "Andrei Roublev" (1966). . . . Feb. 15 at 8:30: "Solaris" (1972). . . . Feb. 16 at 3: "Stalker" (1979). . . . Feb. 16 at 9: "Nostalghia" (1983). . . . ¶ Feb. 13 at 9: "Dear Summer Sister" (1972, Nagisa Oshima; in Japanese). . . . ¶ A program of films by Sergei Eisenstein. Feb. 14 at 6: "Strike" (1925, silent). . . . Feb. 15 at 6: "Potemkin" (1925, silent). . . . Feb. 16 at 6: "October" (1927, silent). . . . Feb. 17 at 6:30: "Old and New" (1929; silent). . . . Feb. 17 at 9: Three short films by and about Eisenstein. . . . Feb. 18 at 7: "Que Viva Mexico!" (†). . . . ¶ Feb. 14 at 10: A program of films by Paul Sharits. . . . ¶ Feb. 15-16 at 4: "2 x 50 Years of French Cinema" (1995, Jean-Luc Godard; in French). . . . ¶ Feb. 15 at 6: "Horsing Around" (1989, Vera Chytilová; in Czech). . . . ¶ Feb. 17 at 9: "Wings of Desire" (1988, Wim Wenders; in German). . . . ¶ Feb. 18 at 9: "Une Femme Douce" (1969, Robert Bresson; in French).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Feb. 16 at 7, the feature will be "The Way We Were" (†).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363)—Through Feb. 13: "Visiting Desire" (1996, Beth B) and "Le Doulos" (1962, Jean-Pierre Melville; in French). . . . From Feb. 14: "Visiting Desire" and "Boyfriends" (1996, Neil Hunter and Tom Hunsinger).

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. (718-638-5000)—Feb. 15 at 2: "W. E. B. DuBois: A Biography in Four Voices" (1995, Louis Massiah). . . . Feb. 15 at 4:45: "In Motion: Amiri Baraka" (1983, St. Clair Bourne). . . . Feb. 15 at 6: "Fundi: The Story of Ella Baker" (1989, Joanne Grant). . . . Feb. 16 at 2: "Aimé Césaire: A Voice for History" (1993, Euzhan Palcy). . . . Feb. 16 at 5:30: "Lumumba: Death of a Prophet" (1992, Raoul Peck).

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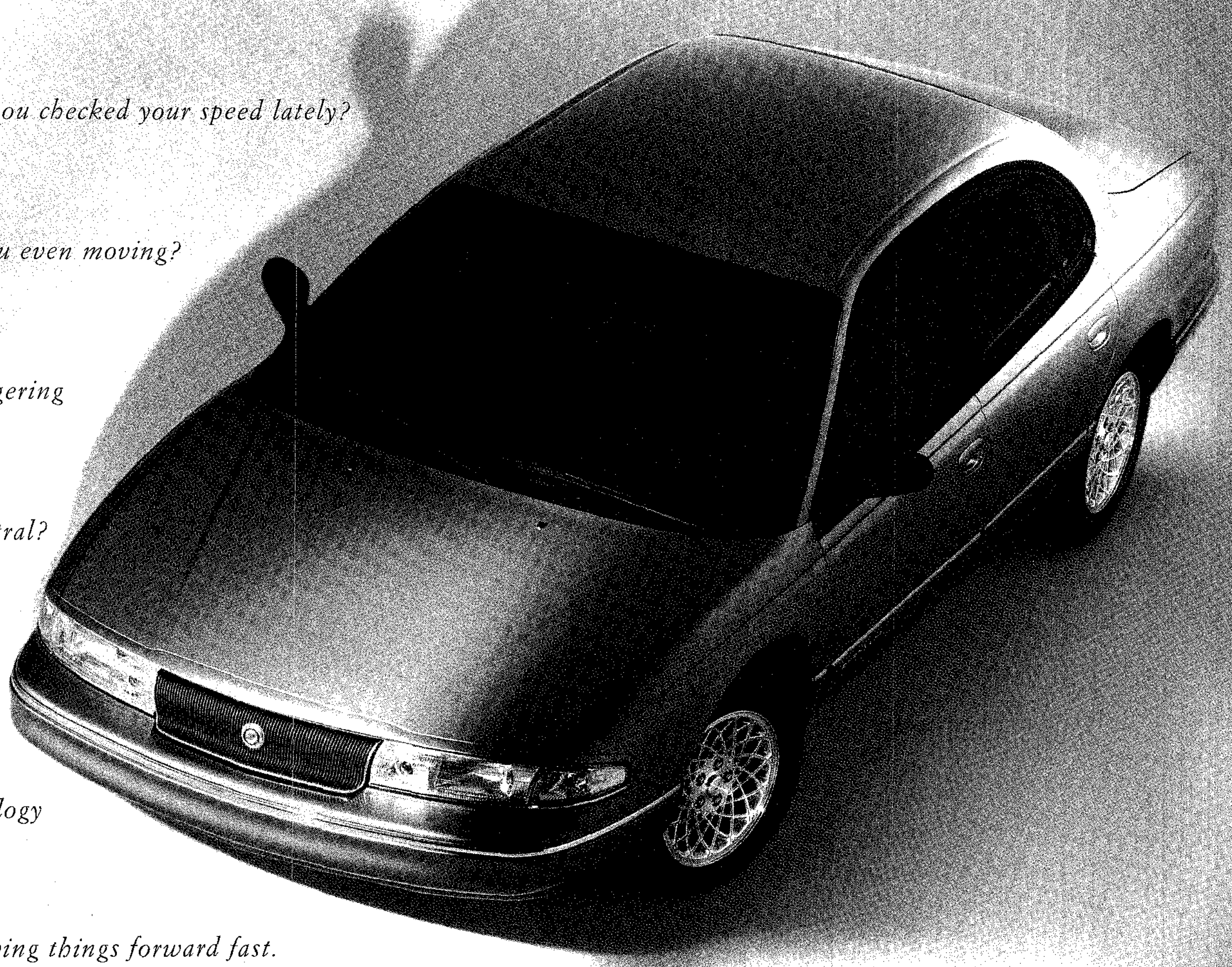

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THE NEW YORKER

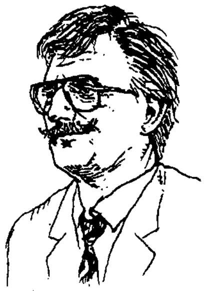
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

AFTER THE VERDICT

THERE was a time when Ronald Goldman was referred to as the "other" victim in the O. J. Simpson murder case—an unfortunate supporting player in a drama that centered on an unforgiving, famous husband and his glamorous, frightened wife. Yet when the members of Goldman's immediate family stepped out of the Santa Monica courthouse last week after the jury's verdict in their wrongful-death lawsuit against Simpson, helicopter searchlights, cameras, and microphones tracked their every move, and their newsworthiness, for the moment, surpassed even that of the President, who had just finished his State of the Union Address.

From the courthouse, the Goldmans—Ron's father, Fred; his sister, Kim; and his stepmother, Patti—walked to the Doubletree hotel, a block away, to celebrate the end of an ordeal that had taken two years and eight months to reach its conclusion. Gathering in the tastefully nondescript suite that had served as their lawyers' storm center during the trial, the Goldmans and a few friends, including Ron Shipp, a former police officer, who had once been close to Simpson, toasted one another with champagne and nibbled on delivered pizza. Setting the obligatory tone was Daniel Petrocelli, the lead lawyer, who exclaimed to no one in particular, "We kicked their ass. We kicked their *ass!*"

Fred Goldman, whose sorrowful rage provided the Simpson drama with some of its most unforgettable moments, was as ready as ever to face the cameras. At one point, he ducked outside to meet a half-dozen local-news teams that were waiting at the door. When he returned to the party, he smiled broadly as he shouted to Petrocelli across the room, "I think I just broke the gag order. Can you be my lawyer?" Goldman, who quit a job in sales to become the spokesman for Safe Streets Alliance, a criminal-justice-reform group, turned sombre and statesmanlike when somebody brought up the subject of the Simpson case's racial divisiveness. "Everywhere we go, we have black people coming up to us, telling us that they think Simpson's guilty and how sorry they are for Ron," he said. "You should see the mail we get saying the same thing. It's not just a black-white thing."


Fred Goldman

A brief silence followed. And in that moment the vigorously public Fred Goldman was replaced by someone whose rumpled clothes and bloodshot eyes were those of an ordinary man who had been through what was, in every sense, an extraordinary trial. "No," he said, turning to leave. "It's awful, just awful. Always has been. I guess it always will be."

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JARRETT HUDDLESTON

BACK TO THE FUTURE

OVERHEARD between a father and son who were standing in the ticket-holders' line at the Ziegfeld, two hours before the first screening of the digitally enhanced "Star Wars":

FATHER: You're gonna *love* this.

SON: O.K., Dad, I know.

FATHER: No, you really will. It'll be better than the video, I promise.

SON: *Daa*-ad . . . I like the video.

FATHER: But this'll be better. It'll be, you know, better.

SON: How do *you* know? It was, like, twenty years ago when you saw it in the theatre, right? Right?

FATHER: Well . . .

SON: Well, what?

FATHER: I never actually saw it in the theatre back then.

SON (*suddenly aware of others in line*): Jeez, Dad. What kind of geek were you, anyway?

SUGAR BABIES

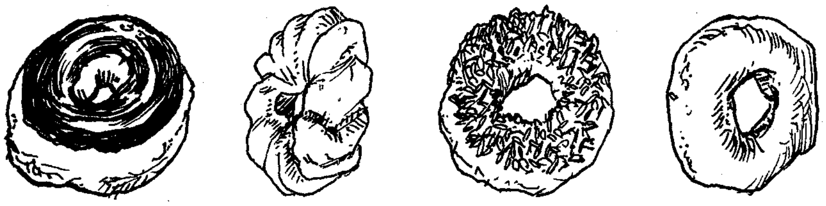
A box of twelve shiny glazed doughnuts arrived at our offices with the following note:

I LOVE doughnut machines. I have had a thing about them ever since I read "Homer Price," Robert McCloskey's children's classic, which involves a doughnut machine that won't stop making doughnuts: "The rings of batter kept right on dropping into the hot fat, and an automatic gadget kept right on turning them over, and another automatic gadget kept right on giving them a little push, and the doughnuts kept right on rolling down the little chute, just as regular as a clock can tick."

My favorite doughnut machine sits in the window of Dreesen's market in East Hampton. It produces a fine specimen of doughnut, if you like doughnuts. But I don't, really. Most doughnuts taste like fried cake dough, which is what they are, and they cause doughnut stomach, the primary symptom of which is the recurring sense for hours afterward that you have eaten a doughnut earlier in the day.

I spent many hours happily gazing at doughnut machines but avoiding doughnuts until last summer, when the Krispy Kreme doughnut craze began to sweep New York and I got hooked. The modest, clean Krispy Kreme doughnut store on West Twenty-third Street, with its retro green Formica tables and red-and-green neon "Hot Doughnuts Now" sign, has become a shrine, complete with pilgrims, fanatics, converts, and proselytizers—the sort of religious experience New Yorkers like me are far more receptive to than the ones that actually involve God. The Krispy Kreme Original Glazed doughnut is yeast-raised and light as a frosted snowflake. It is possible to eat three of them in one sitting without suffering any ill effects. Ian Curwen, who used to work at the Twenty-third Street store, once ate forty-eight. "Ian was a big guy," Jon Faber, who runs the store, says.

Krispy Kremes have been a religious experience in the South for sixty years, and it was there, in Mississippi in 1995, that a New Yorker named Mel Lev tasted his first Krispy Kreme Original Glazed doughnut and knew he had found—not God, exactly, but something right up there. Lev, fifty-six, owns a shirt-manufacturing company called Mareh—named for himself; his wife, Aura; and their sons, Russell, Eric, and Howard—and he was staying with a few friends in a Jackson hotel when someone suggested they drive over to a nearby Krispy Kreme store and buy four dozen doughnuts. "What do we need four dozen doughnuts for?" was the last reported sentence Mel Lev uttered before eating four of them on the ride back. Three months later, he was in negotiation to become the exclusive Krispy Kreme franchisee for New York and New Jersey and promptly formed a new company to run the enterprise, called Harem—after Howard, Aura, Russell, Eric, and himself. Howard Lev, twenty-seven, was put in charge, and he went off to attend Doughnut University at Krispy Kreme headquarters in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, stayed there eight weeks, and has never looked back. "I hated the shirt business," he says.



The store on West Twenty-third Street has its problems—neighbors complain about the constant smell of sugar and frying oil—but they are not financial. The Levs say the store will gross more than a million dollars in its first year, and in December they opened a second store in Harlem across from the Apollo Theatre. I went there one day recently to see the new doughnut machine, which makes two hundred and seventy dozen doughnuts an hour, a hundred and twenty dozen more than the one on Twenty-third Street. It cost around two hundred thousand dollars, and it is an enormous contraption. The person who mixes the dough from fifty-pound bags of Krispy Kreme Raised Doughnut Mix is known as the production specialist, and the person who puts jelly into the jelly doughnuts and sugar onto the sugared doughnuts is known as the processing specialist, and the people who sell the doughnuts are known as retail specialists. The machine drops six rings of batter at a time, and the doughnuts travel on green wire-mesh trays into a ten-foot-tall proof box, where the trays rise and fall like elevator cars until the doughnuts puff up and are ready for the oil. The whole operation is visible from the street and you can stand there and hold your children up to the window to watch as an automatic gadget turns the doughnuts over, and another automatic gadget gives them a little push and finally, gloriously, they're hosed down with a gusher of powdered-sugar glaze that coats them and turns gently crispy as they move along, just as regular as a clock can tick. The sight of all those doughnuts marching solemnly to their fate makes me proud to be an American. Sue me. That's how I feel.

THE HAIRSPLITTER

A HUNDRED and eighty-eight years after the sixteenth President's birth, on February 12, 1809, a reappraisal of his twenty-five years as a lawyer is in the works. A portrait of A. Lincoln, Esq., including every jot and tittle of his legal career, is expected to be available in a CD-ROM facsimile set next year and in four hefty interpretative volumes by the year 2003.

For those who can't wait, a small foretaste is turning up in cyberspace. Punch http://www.fgi.net/LincolnLegalPapers and you'll find this description of Lincoln's tough professional (rather than homespun) abilities before the horse-and-buggy bar of his time:

> Neither flowery nor bombastic, he nevertheless frequently sought continuances, changes of venue, dismissals on technical grounds, and other tactical maneuvers when it was to his client's advantage. In short, as Robert Bruce [a historian] has observed, "He could split hairs as well as rails." At the same time, however, Lincoln also displayed great skill in mediating disputes and playing the role of peacemaker.

The new findings—gleaned from cardboard boxes, overlooked courthouse records, and attics and archives by a small group of researchers known around the Old State Capitol in Springfield as the Lincoln Legals—depict a far more sophisticated Lincoln than has appeared in biographies. The all too familiar image of Lincoln the lawyer, during what Carl Sandburg called Lincoln's "prairie years," is that he was either saving accused felons by holding up false almanacs before friendly jurors or snapping his galluses on behalf of railroad barons for big bucks. Both happen to be fabrications, and, what's more, oversimplify his formative years.

By scrolling through some five hundred subjects, containing thousands of legal documents, on the database that is now being prepared, you will be able to find that Lincoln handled almost every kind of case: admiralty law, antitrust, homicide, civil rights, class action, copyright, divorce, immigration, prostitution, runaway slaves, and, as his reputation grew, the rights and obligations of private railroads in the expanding West. Among the major discoveries is that Lincoln was so deeply trusted that he served as an acting circuit-court judge in three hundred cases and appeared before the Illinois Supreme Court in more than three hundred matters.

Lincoln's fee books disclose that he earned about two thousand dollars a year in his one-partner law firm. Most of his cases yielded two-figure fees, with the exception of appellate work for the Illinois Central and other railroads. In one trailblazing case, Lincoln successfully argued that railroad property could be exempted from local taxation, but then he had to sue the railroad for his fee, the biggest of his career—five thousand dollars.

"Why, sir," said George B. McClellan, then an Illinois Central executive, "this is as much as Daniel Webster himself would have charged!" Supported by his fellow appeals lawyers, Lincoln won the whole amount.

Cullom Davis, who is the director and senior editor of the Lincoln Legal Papers (which is funded both by the state and by private sources), says that when the electronic and print versions appear "the last large gap in our Lincoln knowledge will be filled." The record, he promised, will show that Lincoln was no hick lawyer.

I DO, I DO

JUST in time for Valentine's Day comes "Vows: Weddings of the Nineties from *The New York Times,*" a collection of the wedding-of-the-week pieces that have been appearing in the Sunday *Times* for the past five years or so. The author, Lois Smith Brady, says that the beat has turned her into a "dewy-eyed New Yorker," but she wasn't always that way. "I remember a particularly horrible Valentine's Day, back in 1987," she said, sitting in the living room of her house, in Bridgehampton, in front of a pile of books that belong to her two-year-old son. "I had a date at a surf bar on the Upper West Side, and after one drink the guy got up to go to the bathroom and just disappeared. I ended up walking home by myself. There were these kids in the street playing Frisbee with the metal tops of coffee cans, and I remember thinking, It's Valentine's Day in New York, and I'm on the verge of being decapitated."

A slim bespectacled blonde in her late thirties, Brady said, "I think I'm drawn to weddings because my own was the world's worst." She and her husband, Tom Van Allen, an architect, were married in a small chapel on the beach in Southampton, in September of 1988. The minister, she recalled, "gave a sermon on menopausal women—how they go a little crazy, and how Tom had better be prepared for that and stick with me."

Brady has covered weddings pretty much everywhere, from the lawn of Gracie Mansion to the No. 9 train; she watched one couple exchange vows while dressed up as ladybugs; and she has eaten shrimp that were, she said, as large as ankle weights. "The more weddings I go to, the more fascinating I find them," she went on. "I think New York is the most romantic city in the world. It makes you realize how many different *kinds* of love there are."

Lois Smith Brady

Brady said that she seldom encounters the kind of passion depicted in the desert scenes of "The English Patient." "Maybe once or twice a year, the photographer and I will look at each other and think, These two have *more.* But, of course, these couples aren't always the ones that last." In any case, she has learned not to make predictions. "Sometimes after I hand in a column my colleagues will say, 'Why even print it? It'll be over in two weeks.' But then two years go by, and you bump into the couple on the street. They're pushing a stroller and are madly in love."

On being asked whether she had any theory about what keeps her own marriage together, Brady laughed. "We don't celebrate Valentine's Day," she said. "And we can't remember what our wedding date was. I covered a woman recently who said, 'Lois, I never want anyone to bring me roses. If anything, I want a bottle of single-malt whiskey.' Now, I don't know if single-malt whiskey would be my choice, but I think that attitude toward romance pretty much encapsulates ours—which is just ignore it and hope it lasts."

THE CRUELLEST MONTH

Fax from a professor of communication studies at the University of North Carolina, in Chapel Hill:

BLACK HISTORY MONTH is here again, and, as usual, I suddenly have more speeches (thirty) to give than there are days in the month. Some people had the nerve to call me in January, asking if I could lecture at their particular institutions "next month." Don't they know the routine? On my calendar, February has been gone since last March.

For most black petit-bourgeois intellectuals, February is the Big Month. Among the cognoscenti, it is known as National Negro Rental Month and The Colored Folks Festival, because of all the African-American intellectuals it sends running through airports. A random sampling reveals that the N.Y.U. historian Robin D. G. Kelley is giving ten outside lectures this month, having turned down forty other invitations. The Union Theological Seminary scholar James Melvin Washington accepted ten of forty offers, most of them from black church groups. Only gluttons for punishment—and, of course, cash—greet this time of year with glee.

To some of us, the fact that Black History Month is celebrated in February, the shortest month of the year, suggests a white conspiracy to keep the festivities as short as possible. In fact, the man responsible for the scheduling is one of our own—the Harvard historian Carter G. Woodson, who founded Negro History Week in 1926 and later extended it to span the month in which Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln were born. That February also sees below-freezing temperatures in many parts of the country adds to the conspiracy theory. I've heard a few of my colleagues argue that Black History Month should honor towering black figures born in May or September, like Reggie Jackson or Billie Holliday.

The unkindest thing about Black History Month is the implication that twenty-eight days are all we need to discuss black life and culture. It's as though we can't discuss black contributions to democracy in March or talk about black cowboys in November. What's a black intellectual to do? We want America to celebrate black history—we just don't want the celebration to end in February. And we don't want to be so worn out that it takes the rest of the year to recuperate. ♦

"After the Verdict," Jeffrey Toobin; "Back to the Future," Joshua Weinberger; "Sugar Babies," Nora Ephron; "The Hairsplitter," Herbert Mitgang; "I Do, I Do," Lauren MacIntyre; "The Cruellest Month," Michael Eric Dyson.

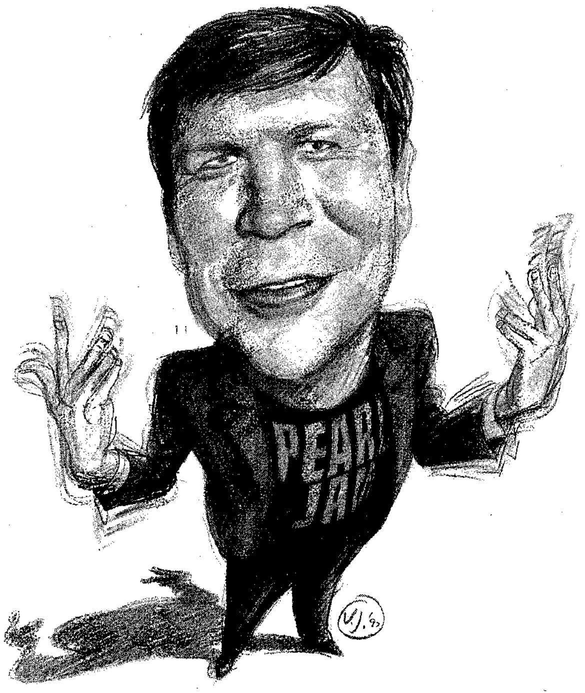
LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

BALANCING ACT

John Kasich, the G.O.P.'s unlikely budget crusader.

BY JOE KLEIN

ON a recent, wan Washington morning, five United States senators wearing dark suits and subdued ties walked into a stately Senate hearing room and announced to the press that they planned to seek the creation of—well, of another bipartisan commission. But this was a notable, perhaps even memorable, gathering for several reasons. One was suggested by a cartoon poster—flanking the senators, stage right—of a lascivious pig embracing the Capitol dome, surrounded by thick wads of cash and the words "A Diet for Corporate America." Indeed, the senators were proposing to examine the hundreds of subsidies and tax loopholes granted to individual American businesses—which may amount to as much as a hundred and fifteen billion dollars per year—and then to submit a list of candidates for elimination. There was very little chance that anything so grand would ever happen, but the press conference reflected a growing sense among politicians that some of the more spectacular benefits—less politely known as "corporate welfare"—have become an embarrassment in this budget-fussy era and need to be scaled back.



Grunge pol: Kasich may be "the first significant Generation X-style politician."

VICTOR JUHASZ

The morning also was notable for the presence of a visitor from the House of Representatives: John Kasich, of Ohio, the chairman of the Republican Budget Committee. Kasich was easily distinguishable from the senators by his dress—a blue blazer and corduroy slacks—and by his demeanor, which was highly caffeinated. Invited to the podium after each of the five senators had offered reasoned and decorous—if not quite memorable—remarks, Kasich reinvented a famous Clinton line: "It's time to end welfare as we know it . . . for *corporations*." He didn't speak from notes, and soon he was gesticulating emphatically—both hands chopping vertically, fingers splayed. It was a complicated body language, at once desperate and humorous. He said that welfare had been reformed only for the "poor and powerless, the people without lobbyists." Now, it was "only fair" to take the final steps toward a balanced-budget agreement by going after more powerful interests. "It's the American way!" he declared, then stepped aside—but quickly stepped back, saying, "I'm really concerned about the growing differences between rich and poor in this country, the stagnating wages. . . ." A few minutes later, he was lamenting the difficulty of expunging even the most outrageous loopholes. Pitching a thumb toward Senator Ted Kennedy, who stood behind him, grinning uncontrollably—a common reaction when people

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listen to Kasich speak—the forty-four-year-old congressman said, "Hey, I remember hearing him talking about this stuff when I was a kid!"

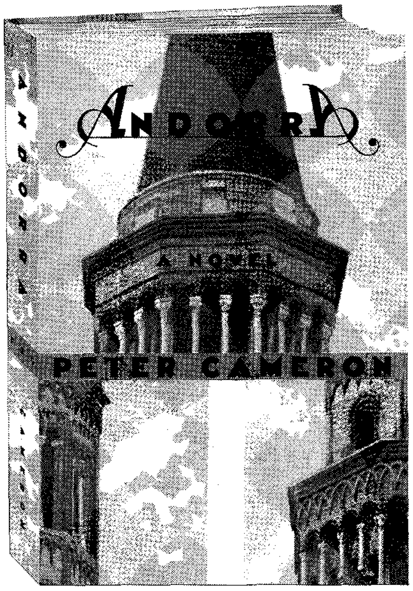
Kasich had just come from his own, much rowdier "Stop Corporate Welfare!" press conference on the other side of the Capitol. He had offered something less grand but perhaps more threatening than the Senate's commission—a modest but specific list of programs to be cut and a coalition to fight for their elimination. The coalition, and the resulting scene, was pure Kasich: an outlaw riff on Clintonian bipartisanship. He seemed to *exclude* the "vital" center, commingling paleo-liberals and Neanderthal conservatives, tree-huggers and budget-cutters—representatives of nine prominent pressure groups whom the congressman had been wheedling and cajoling for months, in a dozen brutal meetings, to see if some common ground could be located. And so Kasich faced a hearing room full of resentful lobbyists and skeptical reporters, flanked by the dour Ralph Nader and the puckish archconservative Grover Norquist (of Americans for Tax Reform), among others. As he introduced his allies, Kasich could barely control himself: "These people decided to seek out the best in each other," he said, "rather than find ways to disagree, which is what we usually do."

They hadn't agreed on much: a list of twelve obscure and dauntingly complicated corporate subsidies, worth a mere eleven and a half billion dollars in savings over five years. But it was sufficiently controversial that only two of Kasich's four hundred and thirty-four House colleagues—a Republican and a Democrat—had been willing to stand with him that morning. He had been hoping for more. "There were a lot of guys who said, 'Hey, I'm with you on eleven out of twelve,' " he said later. "So I'd tell them the story about Jesus and the rich young ruler who asks how to get into the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus says, 'You have to do these six things.' The young ruler says, 'I'm already doing them.' Jesus says, 'Oh, and one other thing. You have to give all your money away.' " There was a disconcerting artlessness to the segue from politics to religion. It was implicitly self-righteous without seeming haughty; Kasich's religiosity was like his body language—fervent yet ironic. Now he shrugged. He'd been through this before: "You know how few of them were with me when I started doing my own budgets?"

John Kasich has been a politician since he graduated from Ohio State University, in 1974, and he has always harbored a classic conservative mistrust of government spending. But the skepticism turned into a crusade, he claims, one day when he was filling up at Johnny's Union 76 gas station in Columbus, Ohio, in early 1989. He was telling Johnny that he'd just been named to the House Budget Committee, and that it was a real pain—a lot of partisan posturing, nothing ever getting done. He went on and on. Finally, a stranger at the next pump said, "Hey, Kasich, why don't you stop complaining and do something about it?" So he decided to write—and submit—his own budget.

Thirty House members voted for that Kasich budget, in 1989. It was an event too insignificant to be considered a fiasco. Kasich had been elected to the House in 1982, representing a district that included much of Columbus and two outlying counties. He was thirty years old when he arrived, but looked much younger—and acted younger still: for many years, he was better known in Washington for the time he was hustled offstage during a Grateful Dead concert than for his obsession with budget-cutting, though the two seemed equally ingenuous. "Every year there was the Black Caucus budget, the Boll Weevil budget, and the Kasich budget," says Leon Panetta, who chaired the Budget Committee and graciously allowed each of these implausible alternatives the honor of being defeated in a recorded vote.

Gradually, though, colleagues began to appreciate the line-by-line integrity of Kasich's numbers. "He was obviously very bright," Panetta recalls. "He became someone whose opinion you had to respect, even if you disagreed with him—as I did, on most social issues." But Kasich didn't limit his zeal to cutting money from "social issues." He spared nothing. He created unlikely coalitions, and won a few small victories. He joined the California liberal Ron Dellums to cut back—and nearly kill—the Stealth bomber. Each year, he received a few more votes, and in 1991 the House—still dominated



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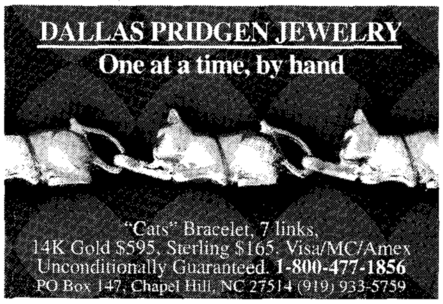

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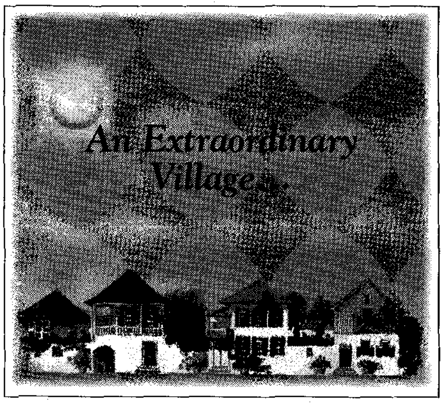

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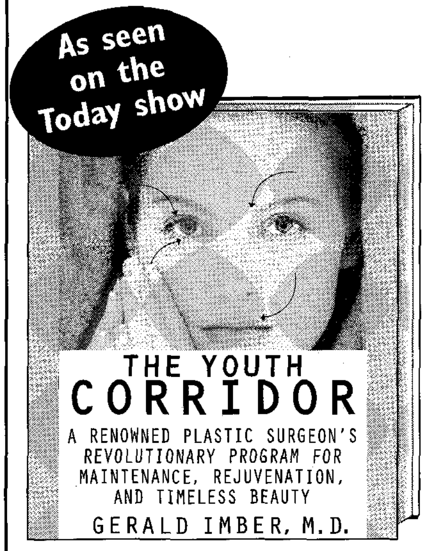
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by Democrats—gave the Kasich budget more votes than George Bush's usual "dead-on-arrival" plan.

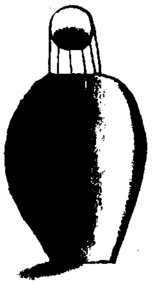
Over time, John Kasich's obsession has become the conventional wisdom: the struggle for a balanced budget will dominate the political agenda in Washington this year, and the expectation is that Congress and the President will eventually reach a historic accord. Many of Kasich's colleagues, even those who still consider him unripe, think he deserves much of the credit for this.

On the morning after his corporate-welfare press conference, I went to see Kasich at his small white cottage in the predominantly middle-class suburb of Westerville, Ohio. Shortly after I arrived, he bounded from his den and announced, "Alan Greenspan is *such a great guy*." He'd been on the phone with the chairman of the Federal Reserve. "He's so smart—and yet he talks to *me*." This was not a very dignified entrance, but Kasich is struggling with the question of how much of his natural exuberance to sacrifice in the service of gravitas. He knows that in a world of blue suits, red ties, and scripted sound bites his competitive advantage is spontaneity, a stubborn refusal to put on airs.

Given a live audience, he never fails to mention that his father was a mailman in McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania. "He raised three kids and sent us to college on one salary," he says. "Hard to do that these days." But very rarely—at least, in public—will Kasich tell the rest of the story: his parents were killed by a drunk driver as they pulled out of a fast-food restaurant ten years ago. After that, he became—for the first time since his days as an altar boy—deeply and unapologetically religious. He didn't return to the strict Catholicism of his youth; his new faith was less formal, more evangelical. "He dragged a bunch of us into a Bible-study group," I was told by Ron Hartman, a Columbus lawyer, who is perhaps Kasich's closest friend. "I just did it for John at first, but I've got to admit it's been a great thing." The death of Kasich's parents also seemed to intensify his identity, in a way: he insisted on seeing Washington as a mailman, like his father, might. That sensibility and the attendant emotions often surface in surprising ways. "I'm in favor of foreign aid," Kasich told me during my visit. "But I can't see spending money on this international club of bureaucrats going around on jets to conferences in Lucerne, staying in fancy hotels and eating high on the hog, when you've got elderly couples back home who save nickels and quarters their whole lives—a big night out is Dairy Queen—just so they can take one trip to London, if they live to get there."

In Washington, opinions about John Kasich tend to divide sharply by age. "The establishment doesn't know what to make of him," the Republican pollster Frank Luntz says. "They know he does his homework—but he doesn't come across as serious enough to be a real player. Younger people get him immediately, though: he may be the first significant Generation X-style politician." The notorious 1994 House Republican freshmen voted him the only honorary member of their class—a move that friends and enemies alike saw as entirely appropriate. But Kasich's most ardent fans tend to be House staffers—of both parties. (His own staff is famously loyal: the first three people he hired when he came to Congress, in 1982—Don Thibaut, Bruce Cuthbertson, and Rick May—still work for him.) "I have a picture of Kasich on my wall," George Withers, a longtime aide to Ron Dellums, says. "And I remember once, at the end of a long session in the Armed Services Committee, I was sitting in the back of the room talking with some other aides—and there's Kasich, climbing over chairs to come back and ask me something. Any other congressman would have signalled me to come over to him, but this is one guy who treats staff no different from members. That's not why I have the picture of him on the wall, though. It's because he absolutely believes in what he's doing, and doesn't care about the consequences."

Kasich's reputation among Republicans is not enhanced by this kind of enthusiasm, or by his sometimes flagrant disregard of congressional etiquette. "There is a certain Republican style," Tony Blankley, who recently resigned as Newt Gingrich's press secretary, says. "Anyone who is not staid tends to irritate the old boys." Kasich is notoriously late for meetings of Gingrich's inner circle, the Speaker's Advisory Group, and when he does arrive he will slouch, jiggle, stare into space, interrupt, go for a cup of coffee, or abruptly leave. "He has a sense of moral and intellectual righteousness," one participant says. "If you don't agree with him, you're caving to the special interests. He's not completely a team player." Indeed, Kasich wouldn't have moved into the Republican leadership at all if it hadn't been for Gingrich's own iconoclastic impulses. In 1993, he favored promoting Kasich over a more senior member to the ranking Republican spot on the Budget Committee, and when the Republicans took control of the Congress he gave Kasich unprecedented power in devising a budget.



Historically, the Budget Committee had been a marginal advisory panel, setting vague numerical targets that were usually ignored. The real decisions were made in the Ways and Means and the Appropriations Committees. In 1995, Gingrich encouraged Kasich to challenge the power structure and suggest specific, often impolitic, reductions in spending. A series of vicious jurisdictional battles between Kasich and Bob Livingston, the Appropriations Committee chairman, ensued. "There were times when they were just screaming at each other in leadership meetings," a participant recalls, "and you just don't see that very often."

At one point, Kasich demanded that the Ways and Means Committee chairman, Bill Archer, attack corporate welfare more vigorously. "I am *sick* and *tired* of hearing you use that phrase," Archer exploded. "It's wrong. It's unfair."

"O.K.," Kasich replied, with a smile. "How about 'inappropriate corporate subsidies.' "

It is one of the great ironies of John Kasich's career that in 1995, when the time came for Republicans officially to offer a balanced budget with a fixed date—2002—he was the only member of the leadership who opposed it. "I wasn't against a balanced budget," he insists now. "Just the seven years." He was proposing most of the same details, including the controversial Medicare reforms and broad tax cuts, but over only five years; he believed that you couldn't make accurate predictions beyond that. Also, seven-year numbers could get pretty frightening: a relatively modest Medicare reform, which would save a hundred and thirty-nine billion dollars over five years, grew exponentially to two hundred and seventy billion over seven.

But Kasich kept his skepticism in check and, with Gingrich and the other Republican leaders, took a disastrously hard line in negotiations with the President, allowing the government to shut down twice in the fall of 1995. The Republican position softened considerably in early 1996—indeed, the leadership appeared desperate for a deal—but the President saw political advantage in portraying the Republicans as extremists, especially on Medicare. In the end, the two sides were tantalizingly close—which is why it is widely assumed that a deal can be struck now that the election is past.

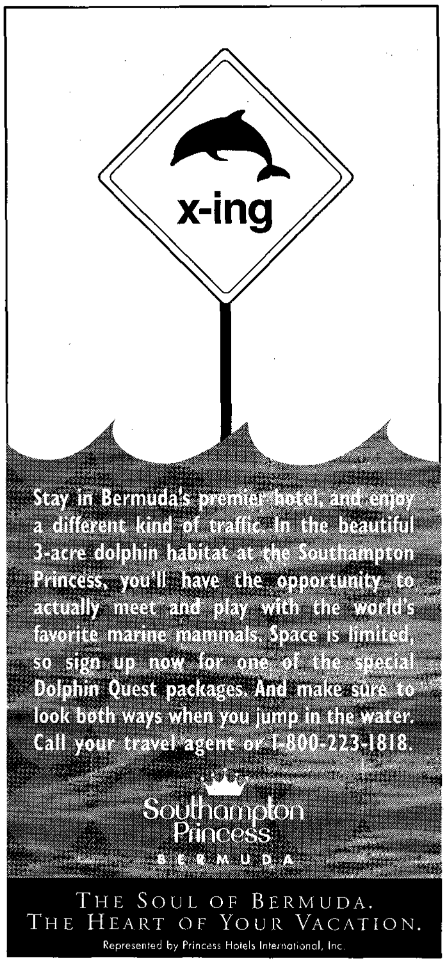
Kasich was intimately involved in the negotiations, as he will be again this year, but his impatience and lack of experience clearly limited his effectiveness. He seemed to take the wrangling personally. He was particularly angry with Leon Panetta, who had become Clinton's chief of staff and led the White House budget team. "I thought Leon was my *friend*," Kasich says. "But he wasn't square with me. He never negotiated in good faith."

"The President was never going to buy their budget," Panetta says in response to this charge. "At one point, I screamed at John, 'Why would you deliberately want to hurt people by shutting down the government?' And he said, 'There are principles involved.' And I said something like, 'Not hurting people is a principle.' It was very intense, but it wasn't personal. These kind of things are never personal. But John's a guy for whom personal relations matter. He wants to be close to people."

KASICH wanted me to meet his fiancée, Karen Waldbillig. After a seven-year courtship, which seems to have been predictably tumultuous, they are getting married in March. (Kasich was married once before, briefly, in the nineteen-seventies.) We had lunch at an exposed-brick pasta place in Columbus, where Karen does public-relations work for a hospital. "Tell Joe what we do when I'm not doing politics," he said.

"When has that been?" she asked.

Kasich rolled his eyes and smiled sheepishly. "Aw, come on," he said. "Sometimes



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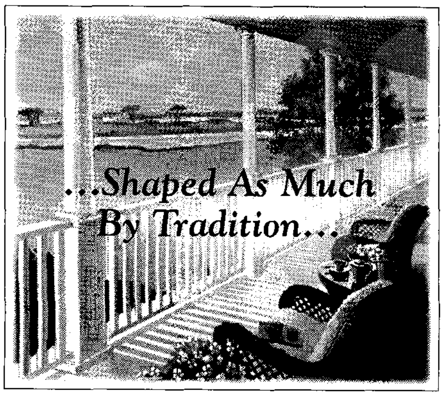

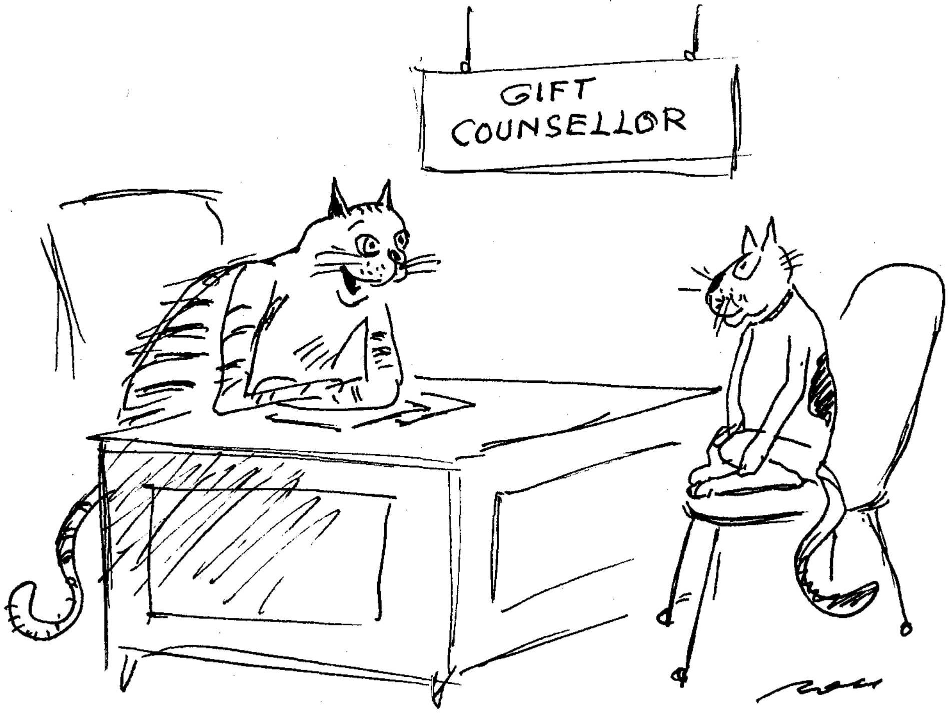

"You can't go wrong with the traditional dead mouse."

• •

we turn off the phone and drink wine and listen to music—and we sing, right?"

"He makes up songs about the dog," she said.

I mentioned to Kasich that his enthusiasm for pop culture and his overt religiosity were perplexing to several of his senior colleagues and to some on the religious right.

"Yeah, I know. But they're insane. They should get a life," he said, leaning into the table. "People who want to separate themselves from the world are just weird. I like baseball, I swear a lot, I like Pearl Jam—and I have a personal relationship with God. But I think He likes Pearl Jam, too. It's like the people who say I don't have gravitas. It's legitimate. I'm getting better at it. But I'm not sure gravitas is about what all these Washington fuddy-duddy stiffs think it is. They count energy as a negative. I'll bet you Teddy Roosevelt never had gravitas in the minds of the political insiders."

The reference to Theodore Roosevelt is not an idle one. Kasich recently anounced that he would not run for Governor of Ohio, or the Senate, in 1998—but he is pointedly not ruling out the Presidential campaign in 2000, an ambition that most of the political community considers premature at best, although there is a sense in Washington that Kasich is growing up. He no longer wears his Elvis or Sesame Street ties. He appears more sober on television. But he wasn't seriously considered for *Vice-President* by Bob Dole last summer. "He was on a lot of other people's lists, but not Dole's," a person familiar with the selection process says. "Dole respects him on the budget, but John came off a little too electric—too hot—on television to be a contender."

Some of Kasich's friends are worried that he'll run for President and get clobbered—not just lose but be humiliated. "He's so open," Don Fierce, a Republican activist who is a longtime Kasich adviser, says. "The press is always looking for a slip of the tongue—and when you speak from heart to mouth, like he does, there are absolutely going to be slips." It would obviously be a long-shot campaign, but there are precedents: Richard Gephardt and Jack Kemp ran for President from the House in 1988, and, though both lost, they both became national figures (and both are likely to try for the Presidency again in 2000). Kasich's natural constituency is coveted in American politics—blue-collar workers, Perot supporters, and Catholics, the swing voters who determine most Presidential elections. He can be a very effective speaker, especially with younger audiences, and his humor, informality, and passion can puncture the withering skepticism that greets any politician who wanders beyond the usual chicken-and-peas precincts.

But Kasich isn't always successful: I saw him get into trouble recently at the Rimrock Corporation, a company that makes industrial robots in Columbus. He began by inviting the workers to "tell me about your families, your struggles. I represent you at a lot of meetings, and it's good to know what you're thinking."

They weren't thinking very much that was pleasant. They were angry about the Gingrich ethics case. They were angry about government waste. "Why can't we get some politicians who take responsibility?" a man asked. "Why can't they listen to what the people want?"

"They do listen," Kasich said. "You should see my mail: don't kill this program, spend more on that one. It's the same for everyone. So they do. You're asking people in public life to behave differently than you do. You're asking them to act 'responsibly,' but that's not always what their constituents want."

The intimacy of the scuffling was unusual for a political meeting, but there was no clear sense, after nearly an hour, that Kasich had broken through their cynicism. "See, they sense I'm one of them, so they open up a little more," Kasich said afterward. "But it's hard for a lot of them to believe they've seen the real McCoy. Hey, I don't want to think about this. Let's turn on the radio."

But he couldn't stop thinking about the Rimrock meeting. Later, sipping hot chocolate at his friend Ron Hartman's farm, north of Westerville, he raised the subject again. "It's like Newt committed a murder or something," he said. "We've gotten so fixated on the negative, the whole country's in a bad mood. I mean, we kind of blew it in the last election. A certain percentage of Republicans have this irrational anger about the President and his wife. But most Americans don't care about Bill Clinton's character. They want to know what we're for. . . . I guess the leadership on both sides let this happen. They just can't let it rest. There always has to be payback. But when you're on your deathbed, do you ask, 'Did I get to throw the last punch?' No, it's 'What good did I do?' Who cares who threw the last punch? People want heroes—and there are no heroes who never make mistakes."

The next few months of budget negotiations are likely to prove frustrating for Kasich. He knows that "balance" is ephemeral and can be easily fudged, and that even nominal balance will be difficult to sustain in future years if real reforms aren't made in costly entitlement programs—particularly Medicare. He also knows that a balanced budget won't win points with the workers at Rimrock if it isn't perceived to be fair, demanding sacrifices not just from the poor and the elderly but from the corporate lobbyists and special interests who exert influence subtly—and, recently, not so subtly—through campaign contributions. But he can't be sure that the Senate majority leader, Trent Lott, who will lead the congressional budget negotiators this time, will share his priorities—or, for that matter, whether Bill Clinton will. "Kasich's been a lot more interested in tackling corporate welfare than most of my old colleagues in the White House," Robert Reich, the former Labor Secretary, said.

And so the congressman is hoping his new campaign will be a useful annoyance. He doesn't expect to abolish many of the twelve subsidies he has targeted this year, but he's thrilled by the coalition he created. After the press conference in the House, each of his corps of paleo-Neanderthals had signed a cartoon of David battling Goliath, and presented it to him. "It was the greatest thing that's happened to me since I was named an honorary freshman," he said. "I talked to God about it last night."

"What did you say to Him?" I asked.

"I was driving home from the airport," Kasich replied, "and I said, 'Thank you, God, for Karen, and for my good health, and for the talents you've given me, and for the opportunity to put together that amazing coalition—and, by the way, I sure as hell hope that you exist." ♦

Hunters bagged 96 deer in Tyler State Park yesterday and state troopers "bagged" one anti-hunt demonstrator. That was eight more than were killed at the last Tyler hunt Jan 6.—*Levittown (Pa.) Bucks County Courier Times.*

Of course, protester season's not over yet.

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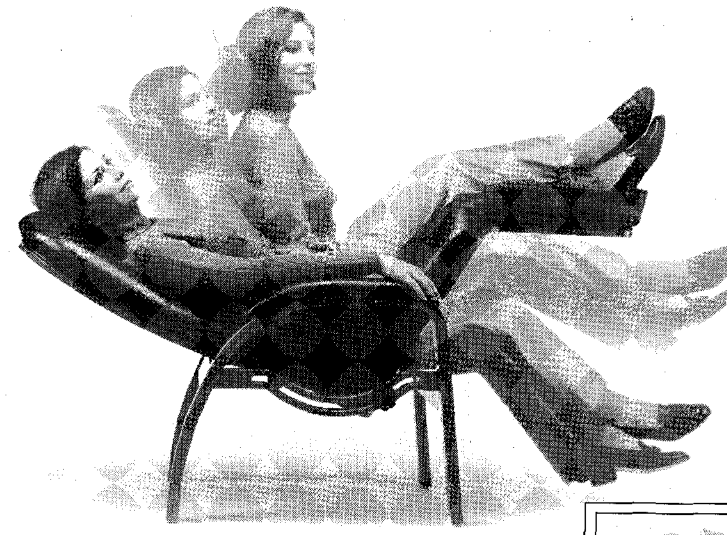

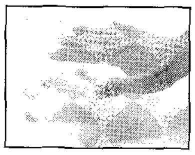

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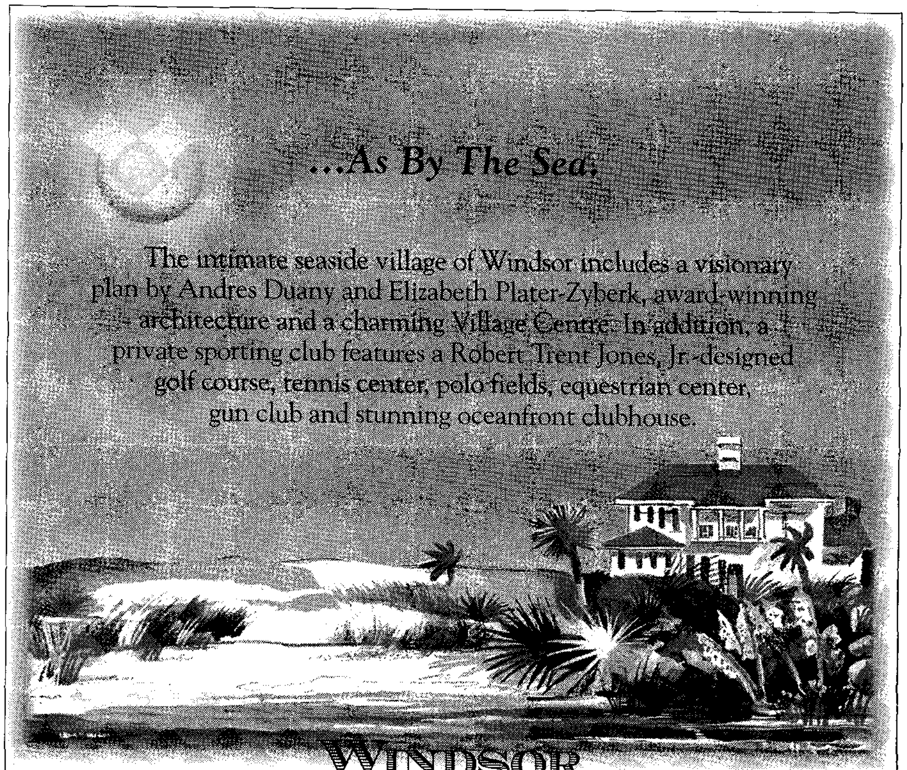

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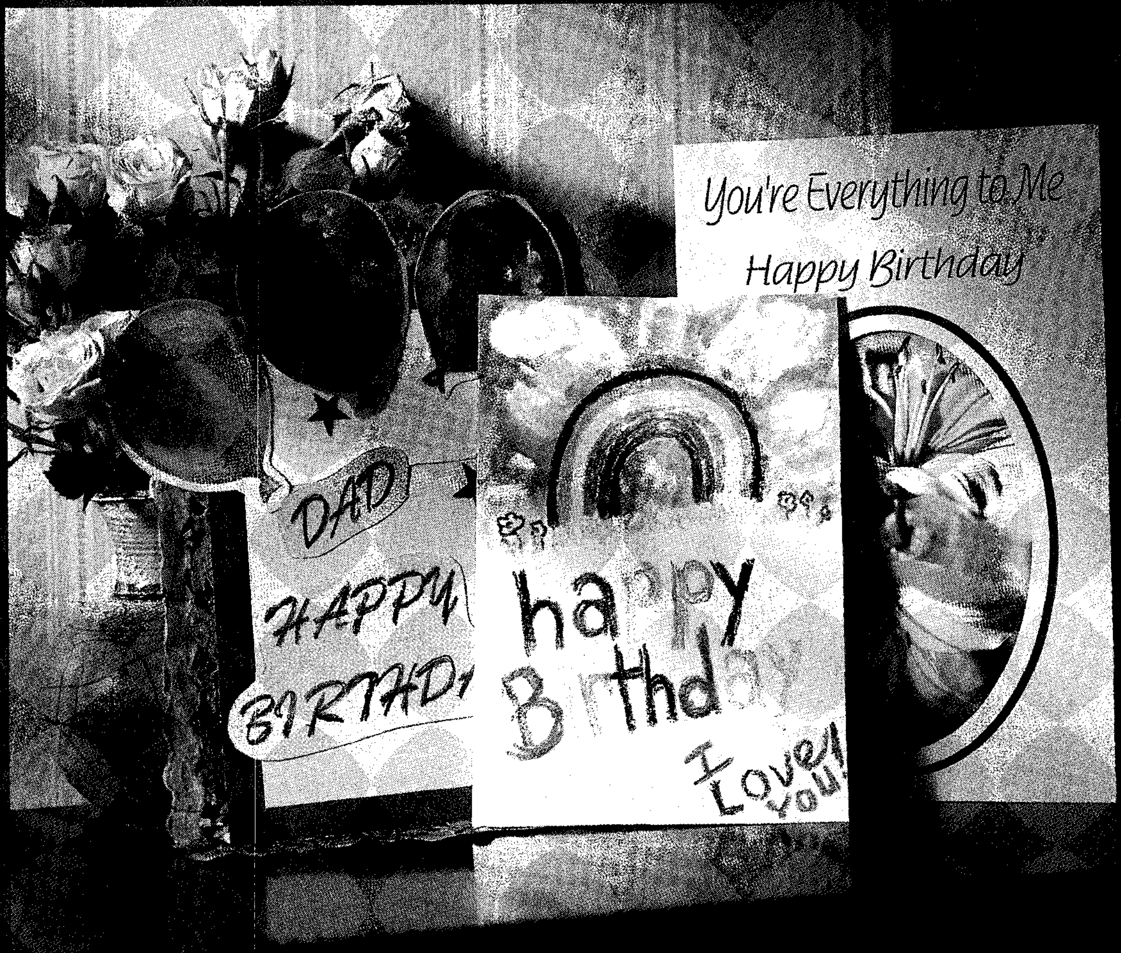
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CONTRAINDICATIONS: Hypersensitivity to any component of this medication. Active liver disease or unexplained, persistent elevations in liver function tests (see **WARNINGS**). *Pregnancy and lactation. Atherosclerosis is a chronic process and discontinuation of lipid-lowering drugs during pregnancy should* have little impact on the outcome of long-term therapy of primary hypercholesterolemia. Cholesterol and other products of cholesterol biosynthesis are essential components for fetal development (including synthesis of steroids and cell membranes). Since HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors decrease cholesterol synthesis and possibly the synthesis of other biologically active substances derived from cholesterol, they may cause fetal harm when administered to pregnant women. Therefore, HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors are contraindicated during pregnancy and in nursing mothers. **Pravastatin should be administered to women of childbearing age only when such patients are highly unlikely to conceive and have been informed of the potential hazards.** If the patient becomes pregnant while taking this class of drug, therapy should be discontinued and the patient apprised of the potential hazard to the fetus. **WARNINGS: Liver Enzymes —** HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors, like some other lipid-lowering therapies, have been associated with biochemical abnormalities of liver function. Increases of serum transaminase (ALT, AST) values to more than 3 times the upper limit of normal occurring on 2 or more (not necessarily sequential) occasions have been reported in 1.3% of patients treated with pravastatin in the US over an average period of 18 months. These abnormalities were not associated with cholestasis and did not appear to be related to treatment duration. In those patients in whom these abnormalities were believed to be related to pravastatin and who were discontinued from therapy, the transaminase levels usually fell slowly to pretreatment levels. These biochemical findings are usually asymptomatic although worldwide experience indicates that anorexia, weakness, and/or abdominal pain may also be present in rare patients. **It is recommended that liver function tests be performed before the initiation of treatment, at 6 and 12 weeks after initiation of therapy or elevation in dose, and periodically thereafter (e.g., semiannually).** Patients who develop increased transaminase levels should be monitored with a second liver function evaluation to confirm the *finding and be followed thereafter with frequent liver function tests until the abnormality(ies) return to normal.* Should an increase in AST or ALT of three times the upper limit of normal or greater persist, withdrawal of pravastatin therapy is recommended. Active liver disease or unexplained transaminase elevations are contraindications to the use of pravastatin (see **CONTRAINDICATIONS**). Caution should be exercised when pravastatin is administered to patients with a history of liver disease or heavy alcohol ingestion (see **CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Pharmacokinetics/Metabolism**). Such patients should be closely monitored, started at the lower end of the recommended dosing range, and titrated to the desired therapeutic effect. **Skeletal Muscle — Rare cases of rhabdomyolysis with acute renal failure secondary to myoglobinuria have been reported with pravastatin and other drugs in this class.** Uncomplicated myalgia has also been reported in pravastatin-treated patients (see **ADVERSE REACTIONS**). Myopathy, defined as muscle aching or muscle weakness in conjunction with increases in creatine phosphokinase (CPK) values to greater than 10 times the upper normal limit, was rare ($< 0.1\%$) in pravastatin clinical trials. Myopathy should be considered in any patient with diffuse myalgias, muscle tenderness or weakness, and/or marked elevation of CPK. Patients should be advised to report promptly unexplained muscle pain, tenderness or weakness, *particularly if accompanied by malaise or fever.* ***Pravastatin therapy should be discontinued*** **if markedly elevated CPK levels occur or myopathy is diagnosed or suspected. Pravastatin therapy should also be temporarily withheld in any patient experiencing an acute or serious condition predisposing to the development of renal failure secondary to rhabdomyolysis, e.g., sepsis; hypotension; major surgery; trauma; severe metabolic, endocrine, or electrolyte disorders; or uncontrolled epilepsy.** The risk of myopathy during treatment with another HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor is increased with concurrent therapy with either erythromycin, cyclosporine, niacin, or fibrates. However, neither myopathy nor significant increases in CPK levels have been observed in three reports involving a total of 100 post-transplant patients (24 renal and 76 cardiac) treated for up to two years concurrently with pravastatin 10-40 mg and cyclosporine. Some of these patients also received other concomitant immunosuppressive therapies. In one single-dose study, pravastatin levels were found to be increased in cardiac transplant patients receiving cyclosporine. Further, in clinical trials involving small numbers of patients who were treated concurrently with pravastatin and niacin, there were no reports of myopathy. Also, myopathy was not reported in a trial of combination pravastatin (40 mg/day) and gemfibrozil (1200 mg/day), *although 4 of 75 patients* on the combination showed marked CPK elevations versus one of 73 patients receiving placebo. There was a trend toward more frequent CPK elevations and patient withdrawals due to musculoskeletal symptoms in the group receiving combined treatment as compared with the groups receiving placebo, gemfibrozil, or pravastatin monotherapy (see **PRECAUTIONS: Drug Interactions**). **The use of fibrates alone may occasionally be associated with myopathy. The combined use of pravastatin and fibrates should be avoided unless the benefit of further alterations in lipid levels is likely to outweigh the increased risk of this drug combination. PRECAUTIONS: General —** Pravastatin may elevate creatinine phosphokinase and transaminase levels (see **ADVERSE REACTIONS**). *This should be considered in the differential diagnosis* of chest pain in a patient on therapy with pravastatin. *Homozygous Familial Hypercholesterolemia.* Pravastatin has not been evaluated in patients with rare homozygous familial hypercholesterolemia. In this group of patients, it has been reported that HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors are less effective because the patients lack functional LDL receptors. *Renal Insufficiency.* A single 20 mg oral dose of pravastatin was administered to 24 patients with varying degrees of renal impairment (as determined by creatinine clearance). No effect was observed on the pharmacokinetics of pravastatin or its 3α-hydroxy isomeric metabolite (SQ 31,906). A small increase was seen in mean AUC values and half-life ($t^1/_2$) for the inactive *enzymatic ring hydroxylation metabolite (SQ 31,945). Given this small sample size, the dosage administered,* and the degree of individual variability, patients with renal impairment who are receiving pravastatin should be closely monitored. **Information for Patients —** Patients should be advised to report promptly unexplained muscle pain, tenderness or weakness, particularly if accompanied by malaise or fever. **Drug Interactions —** *Immunosuppressive Drugs, Gemfibrozil, Niacin (Nicotinic Acid), Erythromycin:* See **WARNINGS: Skeletal Muscle.** *Antipyrine:* Since concomitant administration of pravastatin had no effect on the clearance of antipyrine, interactions with other drugs metabolized via the same hepatic cytochrome isozymes are not expected. *Cholestyramine/Colestipol:* Concomitant administration resulted in an approximately 40 to 50% decrease in the mean AUC of pravastatin. However, when pravastatin was administered 1 hour before or 4 hours after cholestyramine or 1 hour before colestipol and a standard meal, there was no clinically significant decrease in bioavailability or therapeutic effect. (See **DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION: Concomitant Therapy.**) *Warfarin:* In a study involving 10 healthy male subjects given *pravastatin and warfarin concomitantly for 6 days, bioavailability parameters at steady state for pravastatin* (parent compound) were not altered. Pravastatin did not alter the plasma protein-binding of warfarin. Concomitant dosing did increase the AUC and Cmax of warfarin but did not produce any changes in its anticoagulant action (i.e., no increase was seen in mean prothrombin time after 6 days of concomitant therapy). However, bleeding and extreme prolongation of prothrombin time has been reported with another drug in this class. Patients receiving warfarin-type anticoagulants should have their prothrombin times closely monitored when pravastatin is initiated or the dosage of pravastatin is changed. *Cimetidine:* The AUC$_{0\text{-}12\ hr}$ for pravastatin when given with cimetidine was not significantly different from the AUC for pravastatin when given alone. A significant difference was observed between the AUC's for pravastatin when given with cimetidine compared to when administered with antacid. *Digoxin:* In a crossover trial involving 18 healthy male subjects given pravastatin and digoxin concurrently for 9 days, the bioavailability parameters of digoxin were not affected. The AUC of pravastatin tended to increase, but the overall bioavailability of pravastatin plus its metabolites SQ 31,906 and SQ 31,945 was not altered. *Cyclosporine:* Some investigators have measured cyclosporine levels in patients on pravastatin, and to date, these results indicate no clinically meaningful *elevations in cyclosporine levels. In one single-dose study, pravastatin levels were found to be increased in* cardiac transplant patients receiving cyclosporine. *Gemfibrozil:* In a crossover study in 20 healthy male volunteers given concomitant single doses of pravastatin and gemfibrozil, there was a significant decrease in urinary excretion and protein binding of pravastatin. In addition, there was a significant increase in AUC, Cmax, and Tmax for the pravastatin metabolite SQ 31,906. Combination therapy with pravastatin and gemfibrozil is generally not recommended. In interaction studies with *aspirin, antacids* (1 hour prior to PRAVACHOL), *cimetidine, nicotinic acid,* or *probucol*, no statistically significant differences in bioavailability were seen when PRAVACHOL (pravastatin sodium) was administered. *Other Drugs:* During clinical trials, no noticeable drug interactions were reported when PRAVACHOL was added to: diuretics, antihypertensives, digitalis, ACE inhibitors, calcium channel blockers, beta-blockers, or nitroglycerin. **Endocrine Function —** HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors interfere with cholesterol synthesis and lower circulating cholesterol levels and, as such, might theoretically blunt adrenal or gonadal steroid hormone production. Results of clinical trials with pravastatin in males and post-menopausal females were inconsistent with regard to possible effects of the drug on basal steroid hormone levels. In a study of 21 males, the mean testosterone response to human chorionic gonadotropin was significantly reduced ($p< 0.004$) after 16 weeks of treatment with 40 mg of pravastatin. However, the percentage of patients showing a $\geq$ *50% rise in plasma testosterone after* human chorionic gonadotropin stimulation did not change significantly after therapy in these patients. The effects of HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors on spermatogenesis and fertility have not been studied in adequate numbers of patients. The effects, if any, of pravastatin on the pituitary-gonadal axis in pre-menopausal females are unknown. Patients treated with pravastatin who display clinical evidence of endocrine dysfunction should be evaluated appropriately. Caution should also be exercised if an HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor or other agent used to lower cholesterol levels is administered to patients also receiving other drugs (e.g., ketoconazole, spironolactone, cimetidine) that may diminish the levels or activity of steroid hormones. **CNS Toxicity —** *CNS vascular lesions, characterized by perivascular hemorrhage and edema and* mononuclear cell infiltration of perivascular spaces, were seen in dogs treated with pravastatin at a dose of 25 mg/kg/day, a dose that produced a plasma drug level about 50 times higher than the mean drug level in humans taking 40 mg/day. Similar CNS vascular lesions have been observed with several other drugs in this *class. A chemically similar drug in this class produced optic nerve degeneration (Wallerian degeneration of* retinogeniculate fibers) in clinically normal dogs in a dose-dependent fashion starting at 60 mg/kg/day, a dose that produced mean plasma drug levels about 30 times higher than the mean drug level in humans taking the highest recommended dose (as measured by total enzyme inhibitory activity). This same drug also *produced vestibulocochlear Wallerian-like degeneration and retinal ganglion cell chromatolysis in dogs* treated for 14 weeks at 180 mg/kg/day, a dose which resulted in a mean plasma drug level similar to that seen with the 60 mg/kg/day dose. **Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility —** In a 2-year study in rats fed pravastatin at doses of 10, 30, or 100 mg/kg body weight, there was an increased incidence of hepatocellular carcinomas in males at the highest dose ($p < 0.01$). Although rats were given up to 125 times the human dose (HD) on a mg/kg body weight basis, serum drug levels were only 6 to 10 times higher than those measured in humans given 40 mg pravastatin as measured by AUC. The oral administration of 10, 30, or 100 mg/kg (producing plasma drug levels approximately 0.5 to 5.0 times the human drug levels at 40 *mg) of pravastatin to mice for 22 months resulted in a statistically significant increase in the incidence of* malignant lymphomas in treated females when all treatment groups were pooled and compared to controls ($p < 0.05$). The incidence was not dose-related and male mice were not affected. A chemically similar drug in this class was administered to mice for 72 weeks at 25, 100, and 400 mg/kg body weight, which resulted in mean serum drug levels approximately 3, 15, and 33 times higher than the mean human serum drug concentration (as total inhibitory activity) after a 40 mg oral dose. Liver carcinomas were significantly increased in high-dose females and mid- and high-dose males, with a maximum incidence of 90 percent in males. The incidence of adenomas of the liver was significantly increased in mid- and high-dose females. Drug treatment also significantly increased the incidence of lung adenomas in mid- and high-dose males and females. Adenomas of the eye Harderian gland (a gland of the eye of rodents) were significantly higher in high-dose mice than in controls. No evidence of mutagenicity was observed *in vitro*, with or without rat-liver metabolic activation, in the following studies: microbial mutagen tests, using mutant strains of *Salmonella typhimurium* or *Escherichia coli*; a forward mutation assay in L5178Y TK +/- mouse lymphoma cells; a chromosomal aberration test in hamster cells; and a gene conversion assay using *Saccharomyces cerevisiae.* In addition, there was no evidence of mutagenicity in either a dominant lethal test in mice or a micronucleus test in mice. In a study in rats, with daily doses up to 500 mg/kg, pravastatin did not produce any adverse effects on fertility or general reproductive performance. However, in a study with another HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor, there was decreased fertility in male rats treated for 34 weeks at 25 mg/kg body weight, although this effect was not observed in a subsequent fertility study when this same dose was administered for 11 weeks (the entire cycle of spermatogenesis, including epididymal maturation). In rats treated with this same reductase inhibitor at 180 mg/kg/day, seminiferous tubule degeneration (necrosis and loss of spermatogenic epithelium) was observed. Although not seen with pravastatin, two similar drugs in this class caused drug-*related testicular atrophy, decreased spermatogenesis, spermatocytic degeneration, and giant cell formation* in dogs. The clinical significance of these findings is unclear. **Pregnancy: Pregnancy Category X. —** See **CONTRAINDICATIONS.** Safety in pregnant women has not been established. Pravastatin was not teratogenic in rats at doses up to 1000 mg/kg daily or in rabbits at doses of up to 50 mg/kg daily. These doses resulted in 20x (rabbit) or 240x (rat) the human exposure based on surface area (mg/meter^2). However, in studies with another HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor, skeletal malformations were observed in rats and mice. There has been one report of severe congenital bony deformity, tracheo-esophageal fistula, and anal atresia (Vater association) in a baby born to a woman who took another HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor with dextroamphetamine sulfate during the first trimester of pregnancy. PRAVACHOL (pravastatin sodium) should be administered to women of child-bearing potential only when such patients are highly unlikely to conceive and have been informed of the potential hazards. If the woman becomes pregnant while taking PRAVACHOL (pravastatin sodium), it should be discontinued and the patient advised again as to the potential hazards to the fetus. **Nursing Mothers —** A small amount of pravastatin is excreted in human breast milk. Because of the potential for serious adverse reactions in nursing infants, women taking PRAVACHOL should not nurse (see **CONTRAINDICATIONS**). **Pediatric Use —** Safety and effectiveness in individuals less than 18 years old have not been established. Hence, treatment in patients less than 18 years old is not recommended at this time. **ADVERSE REACTIONS:** Pravastatin is generally well tolerated; adverse reactions have usually been mild and transient. In 4-month long placebo-controlled trials, 1.7% of pravastatin-treated patients and 1.2% of placebo-treated patients were discontinued from treatment because of adverse experiences attributed to study drug therapy; this difference was not statistically significant. In long-term studies, the most common reasons for discontinuation were asymptomatic serum transaminase increases and mild, non-specific gastrointestinal complaints. During clinical trials the overall incidence of adverse events in the elderly was not different from the incidence observed in younger patients. **Adverse Clinical Events —** All adverse clinical events (regardless of attribution) reported in more than 2% of pravastatin-treated patients in the placebo-controlled trials are identified in the table below; also shown are the percentages of patients in whom these medical events were believed to be related or possibly related to the drug:

	All Events		**Events Attributed to Study Drug**	
Body System/Event	**Pravastatin (N = 900) %**	**Placebo (N = 411) %**	**Pravastatin (N = 900) %**	**Placebo (N = 411) %**
Cardiovascular				
Cardiac Chest Pain	4.0	3.4	0.1	0.0
Dermatologic Rash	4.0*	1.1	1.3	0.9
Gastrointestinal				
Nausea/Vomiting	7.3	7.1	2.9	3.4
Diarrhea	6.2	5.6	2.0	1.9
Abdominal Pain	5.4	6.9	2.0	3.9
Constipation	4.0	7.1	2.4	5.1
Flatulence	3.3	3.6	2.7	3.4
Heartburn	2.9	1.9	2.0	0.7
General				
Fatigue	3.8	3.4	1.9	1.0
Chest Pain	3.7	1.9	0.3	0.2
Influenza	2.4*	0.7	0.0	0.0
Musculoskeletal				
Localized Pain	10.0	9.0	1.4	1.5
Myalgia	2.7	1.0	0.6	0.0
Nervous System				
Headache	6.2	3.9	1.7*	0.2
Dizziness	3.3	3.2	1.0	0.5
Renal/Genitourinary				
Urinary Abnormality	2.4	2.9	0.7	1.2
Respiratory				
Common Cold	7.0	6.3	0.0	0.0
Rhinitis	4.0	4.1	0.1	0.0
Cough	2.6	1.7	0.1	0.0

Statistically significantly different from placebo.

In the Pravastatin Primary Prevention Study (West of Scotland Coronary Prevention Study) (see **CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Clinical Studies**) involving 6595 patients treated with PRAVACHOL (pravastatin sodium) ($N = 3302$) or placebo ($n = 3293$) the adverse event profile in the pravastatin group was comparable to that of the placebo group over the median 4.8 years of the study. The following effects have been reported with drugs in this class; not all the effects listed below have necessarily been associated with pravastatin therapy: *Skeletal:* myopathy, rhabdomyolysis, arthralgia. *Neurological:* dysfunction of certain cranial nerves (including alteration of taste, impairment of extra-ocular movement, facial paresis), tremor, vertigo, memory loss, paresthesia, peripheral neuropathy, peripheral nerve palsy, anxiety, insomnia, depression. *Hypersensitivity Reactions:* An apparent hypersensitivity syndrome has been reported rarely which has included one or more of the following features: anaphylaxis, angioedema, lupus erythematous-like syndrome, polymyalgia rheumatica, dermatomyositis, vasculitis, purpura, thrombocytopenia, leukopenia, hemolytic anemia, positive ANA, ESR increase, eosinophilia, arthritis, arthralgia, urticaria, asthenia, photosensitivity, fever, chills, flushing, malaise, dyspnea, toxic epidermal necrolysis, erythema multiforme, including Stevens-Johnson syndrome. *Gastrointestinal:* pancreatitis, hepatitis, including chronic active hepatitis, cholestatic jaundice, fatty change in liver, and, rarely, cirrhosis, fulminant hepatic necrosis, and hepatoma; anorexia, vomiting. *Skin:* alopecia, pruritus. A variety of skin changes (e.g., nodules, discoloration, dryness of skin/mucous membranes, changes to hair/nails) have been reported. *Reproductive:* gynecomastia, loss of libido, erectile dysfunction. *Eye:* progression of cataracts (lens opacities), ophthalmoplegia. *Laboratory Abnormalities*: elevated transaminases, alkaline phosphatase, and bilirubin; thyroid function abnormalities. **Laboratory Test Abnormalities —** Increases in serum transaminase (ALT, AST) values and CPK have been observed (see **WARNINGS**). Transient, asymptomatic eosinophilia has been reported. Eosinophil counts usually returned to normal despite continued therapy. Anemia, thrombocytopenia, and leukopenia have been reported with HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors. **Concomitant Therapy —** Pravastatin has been administered concurrently with cholestyramine, colestipol, nicotinic acid, probucol and gemfibrozil. Preliminary data suggest that the addition of either probucol or gemfibrozil to therapy with lovastatin or pravastatin is **not** associated with greater reduction in LDL-cholesterol than that achieved with lovastatin or pravastatin alone. No adverse reactions unique to the combination or in addition to those previously reported for each drug alone have been reported. Myopathy and rhabdomyolysis (with or without acute renal failure) have been reported when another HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor was used in combination with immunosuppressive drugs, gemfibrozil, erythromycin, or lipid-lowering doses of nicotinic acid. Concomitant therapy with HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors and these agents is generally not recommended. (See **WARNINGS: Skeletal Muscle** and **PRECAUTIONS: Drug Interactions.**) **OVERDOSAGE:** To date, there are two reported cases of overdosage with pravastatin, *both of* which were asymptomatic and not associated with clinical laboratory abnormalities. If an overdose occurs, it should be treated symptomatically and supportive measures should be instituted as required.

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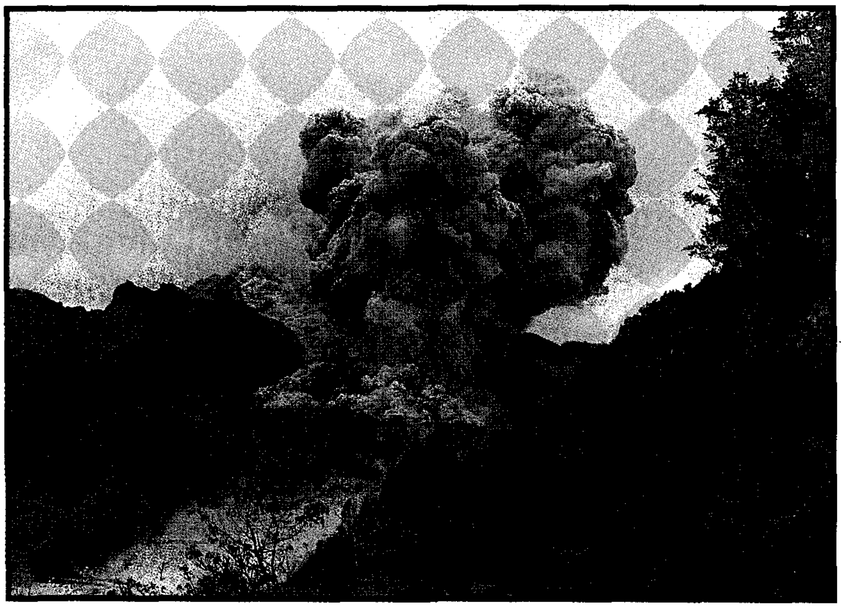
OUR FAR-FLUNG CORRESPONDENTS

GETTING TO KNOW THE VOLCANO

How are the people of Montserrat dealing with one of the most dangerous volcanic threats in the world?

BY WADE GRAHAM

THE sound of the first rockfall was almost faint, like billiard balls cracking together. Next came what could have been the roar of a freight train—so close that it seemed that at any moment the speeding avalanche of rock, superheated gas, and ash would vomit out of the mist to engulf us. I felt a stab of adrenaline, and thought, Be careful what you wish for.



The Soufrière Hills volcano has choked half of the island with clouds of ash.

KEVIN WEST

Volcanoes, in direct proportion to their deadliness, seem to attract tourists of a particularly foolhardy sort. Pliny the Elder, who was perhaps the most celebrated of them, suffocated in the eruption of Italy's Vesuvius in A.D. 79—killed by curiosity. Susan Sontag writes in her novel "The Volcano Lover," "The prying look wishes to be rewarded. Even in the most pacified souls the volcano inspires a lust to see destructiveness." I had come to the tiny Caribbean island of Montserrat to see the Soufrière Hills volcano, which, on July 18, 1995, had waked up from a four-hundred-year nap. I had hoped to see something spectacular, but not for a show like this, at such close range.

For my guide, George Skerritt, this was just another day at work. Skerritt is a Montserratian surveyor who, as part of the scientific team at the Montserrat Volcano Observatory, has been taking ground-deformation readings on the volcano since August of 1995. We had driven up a steep, rutted track to a site under Farrell's Wall, a sheer side of the volcano's crater, so he could take microgravity measurements, which indicate where and how much magma—molten rock—is moving under the mountain. Surrounded by the remains of a rain forest that had been levelled by gases from the volcano, George knelt silently over a microgravity meter, a machine that was indistinguishable from a car battery but was as sensitive as a butterfly. To get a reading, George first carefully adjusted the meter down to a set of exacting tolerances, a painstaking process.

Under our feet, meanwhile, magma was forcing its way to the surface; the ground rumbled, and the rockfalls from the summit grew louder. Because the tremors had set the needle of the meter dancing uncontrollably, George was unable to get a reading; he tuned a radio in to the frequency of the nearest seismic station, so that we could hear the earthquake activity as a tone. The

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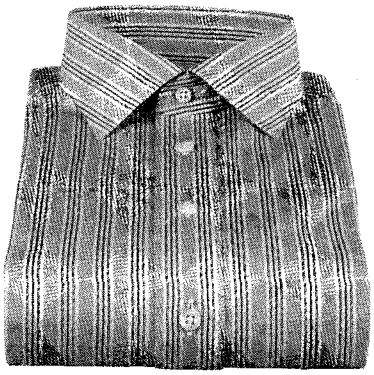

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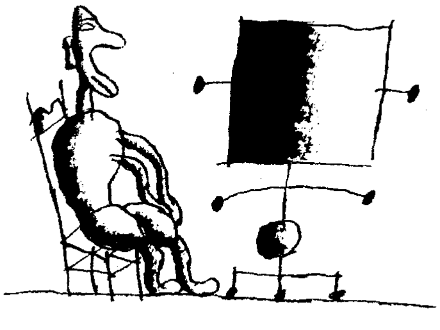
tone began to oscillate, slightly at first, then wildly. A burly, quietly imperturbable man, George said, grinning, "*That* was an event." It was clear from his smile that we were in the midst of a major spasm of activity—one of the largest since the volcano had come back to life a year and a half before. The thin ridge of Farrell's Wall, no more than a few hundred metres away, was all that separated us from the deadly superheated avalanches—volcanologists call them pyroclastic flows—that were now careering down the mountain to crash into the sea. As the flows travelled downslope, clouds of gray and black ash began to boil up over the lower stretches of the Wall and head in our direction. Accompanied by the music of crashing rock and the crazed singing of the seismometer, the clouds were mushrooming and spreading in fine-textured patterns over our heads. It was, I imagined, what one would see looking directly up into the cloud of a nuclear blast. George, unflappable, said, "Don't let it give you any pressure. If it doesn't slow, we give up." It didn't slow, but instead gained intensity.

After what seemed a very long interval, the observatory radioed that we and the other teams on the mountain should retreat. As George and I descended to the coast, I glimpsed cows grazing in their pastures, their backs lightly dusted with volcanic powder. Out to sea, swirls of ash spun lazily away from the island, making turquoise eddies in the deeper blue of the North Equatorial Current. After the terror of the volcano, the countryside seemed willfully indifferent. Of all nature's agents of violence, volcanoes are the most heavily freighted with metaphor: they signify destruction and resurrection, divine retribution, dangerous passion, and revolution. Indeed, following the success of last summer's epic about a malevolent brood of funnel clouds, Hollywood will release two movies this year starring volcanoes—the next installments in an ongoing cinematic series that could be entitled "The Earth Strikes Back." But here all such ideas seemed absurd: here were real people living, day by day, with an erupting volcano—a volcano of their own.

MONTSERRAT, a thirty-nine-and-a-half-square-mile British dependent territory lying within sight of Antigua and Guadeloupe, in the Lesser Antilles, is known for its main import, vacationers, and for its main export, music. The island is revered as a nerve center of the international calypso scene and also as the home of the Beatles producer George Martin's AIR Studios, a recording facility popular with the likes of the Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton, and Sting—popular in no small part because the locals take the presence of stars like Mick Jagger in their midst as unremarkable. It was here that Jimmy Buffett recorded his 1979 album "Volcano," when no one had witnessed a volcanic eruption on Montserrat since its colonization by Europeans, in 1632.

That the Soufrière Hills roared back to life after four hundred years should have come as no surprise. Montserrat is just one address on a rowdy volcanic street—an arc of islands which runs from Saba, north of Montserrat, to Grenada in the south. The word *soufrière*, which in creole French refers to hot springs, spatters every map of the Lesser Antilles; like the geysers of Yellowstone, these numerous hot springs are an indication of volcanic activity. Scientists from the Seismic Research Unit at the University of the West Indies, in Trinidad, who maintain a network of thirty-two seismometers in the Antilles, had noticed unusual earthquake activity at their Montserrat station as early as 1989. They installed two additional stations, but the stations were summarily destroyed on September 17th of that year by Hurricane Hugo. Ninety-five per cent of Montserrat's structures were mangled, including AIR Studios, which was shut down. The S.R.U. seismometers were replaced, but one image, captured by a weather satellite, lingers in the minds of many Montserratians: their tiny green island home lying squarely in the giant hurricane's eye.

After the eruption began on Montserrat in 1995, an international team of scientists, from Trinidad's Seismic Research Unit, the United States Geological Survey, and the British Geological Survey, arrived to advise it during the crisis. The scientific team established sensitive instrument networks on the mountain, linked to a twenty-four-hour monitoring facility, dubbed the Montserrat Volcano Observatory, and began to take the volcano's pulse.



In the first weeks, a series of earthquakes shook the mountain and small phreatic, or steam, eruptions intermittently choked the southern half of the island, including the capital, Plymouth, with gray ash. By themselves, these events were not cause for much alarm—even though the ashfalls, along with high levels of sulfur-dioxide gas, were not conducive to business as usual.

The scientists and the authorities recognized the grim potential in the Soufrière Hills eruption: the mountain was, broadly speaking, the same kind of volcano as Martinique's Mt. Pelée, which, erupting back in 1902, had killed nearly thirty thousand people when a pyroclastic flow incinerated the town of St. Pierre. At the observatory, Dr. Rick Hoblitt, a visiting U.S.G.S. volcanologist, explained the variables to me. Like Mt. Pelée, he said, Soufrière Hills had been building a lava dome, steadily. The lava was gray and pasty—"exceedingly viscous," in Hoblitt's phrase—which caused it to pile up in a steep-sided dome, inside the crater, instead of running off in thin, liquid sheets as does the lava of some other volcanoes, like those in Hawaii. The lava dome, said Hoblitt, acts like a cork in a bottle, plugging the rising conduit of magma. Because the lava is so gas-rich, though, it is building up great pressure beneath the dome, increasing the danger of a sudden violent explosion and a massive pyroclastic flow.

The scientists at the observatory believed that such a flow was unlikely to descend on Plymouth and the developed west side of the island, because the summit crater's lowest point—just above the drainage area of the sparsely inhabited Tar River Valley—faces east. Plymouth is also somewhat protected by the high rampart of Chances Peak—presciently named by the Irish who originally settled the island. As Hoblitt put it, "the good news is that the gun barrel is pointed the other way."

Hoblitt went on to say that the bad news was that, while the eruption had waxed and waned, it had shown no sign of ceasing. Last September 17th, a lateral explosion, followed by a protracted vertical blast, similar to the event that tore apart Washington State's Mount St. Helens in 1980, shook the mountain, raining stone on nearby areas and sending a plume of ash up forty thousand feet. Even more worrisome, the lava dome has since continued to expand, filling what storage space was available inside the crater and intensifying pressure on the crater's western ramparts. Skerritt had told me, "In the early days you had to look down from Chances Peak to see the dome em-

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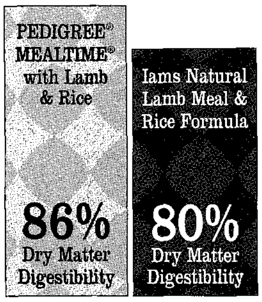

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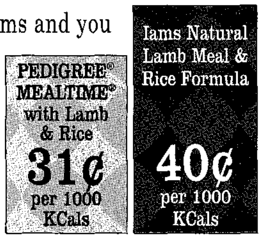

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placement. Now you look *up* at it." Hoblitt put it more tersely: "The bucket is full."

For the Montserratians, most of whom are descendants of West African slaves who began arriving in the late seventeenth century to work on cotton and sugar plantations, all this has meant an end to any sense of peace. On August 23, 1995, two days after a series of eruptive events on what came to be called Ash Monday turned out the lights of Plymouth, Montserrat authorities recommended the evacuation of the southern half of the island, which was where most Montserratians lived. Topographic studies had indicated that the island's northern half could be considered a "safe zone" in the event of a catastrophic eruption. But the north end had been only sparsely developed, and offered little in the way of practical refuge: the island's only port, its government, its hospital, and its important industries all lay in the now unsafe zone. Worse, many public buildings, including the government headquarters, the hospital, the port, the parliament, and the library, had only just been reconstructed after the damage from Hurricane Hugo. Now they had to be abandoned.

In the course of three evacuations—the most recent of them last April—some eight thousand Montserratians have been displaced; of those, more than three thousand left the island entirely, almost one thousand going to Britain, where they now receive social services from the British government, while five thousand moved to the island's north end, crowding into the homes of friends or relatives or into temporary shelters, many of them in churches. Businesses have struggled to find new facilities. Tourism has slowed to a trickle. The government ministries—and the observatory—are occupying vacation villas. Unemployment has reached fifty per cent. Five thousand people receive food assistance. The British government has spent eight million pounds in emergency funds and has further committed twenty-five million to fund new infrastructure, but so far little of this money has been spent, because of administrative delays and difficulties in purchasing land in the north.

LINING the main street of Salem, which was a quiet residential area before the eruption, are converted homes and jury-rigged new structures housing what has become Montserrat's central business district. There is a weirdly cheerful air of normality about the street, which buzzes day and night with shoppers and the patrons of a thriving bar scene while, in the background, ash clouds continue to rise from the distant volcano. From the open doorways of one "rum shop" there blares a song by a local calypso artist, King Kensie, that is entitled "Crisis":

> Crisis
> volcanic crisis
> jeopardize de whole of de island
> economical crisis
> is de cry of de rich and de poor man
> . . . even though things are hard
> everybody must remember
> that little Montserrat is all we've got.

The Montserratians who have chosen to stay are faced with a challenge that few people have ever had to confront or could even imagine: how to live with an erupting volcano. Volcanic time is inchoate and capricious—sometimes fatally quick, more often maddeningly slow. A popular T-shirt in Salem sums up the quandary: "Now she puffs, but will she blow? Trust in God and pray it's no." Montserratians have been told by the observatory's scientists and their elected officials that they have to be ready for a long siege, because dome-building eruptions, whether they climax in a final, catastrophic event or simply fizzle out, can last for months, years, or decades.

Remarkably, many have countered the tension with an attitude of offhand resignation that at times seems to verge on boredom. Steadroy Allen, a young man who has lived for ten months now in Salem's Catholic Church with sixty-seven other evacuees, told me, as we both kept an eye on the ash plume rising from the mountain, "It gets a little repetitive, you know?" Smiling, he added that living under a volcano has also bred a familiarity with volcanology. This was something the Montserrat government had encouraged. Franklyn Michael, permanent secretary to Bertrand Osborne, the Chief Minister, had told me, "At the very beginning of this crisis public officials decided that the average Montserratian should get acquainted with the volcano." According to Richard Aspin, the government's senior information officer, more than forty community meetings have been held in the last six months, bringing scientists together with schoolchildren, police, and evacuees. Three times daily, between calypso tunes, activity reports from the observatory are read over the government's radio station, to which people listen avidly. The average Montserratian by now possesses an understanding of the complex, hidden processes of volcanism which would be impressive in any university science department. People from all walks of life are prepared to debate the significance of "volcano-tectonic earthquakes," "pyroclastic flows," or changing sulfur-dioxide levels in the air. "In the beginning," Aspin said, "we used to translate them into something else. Not anymore."

TO CUPID

You make desire seem easy.
                                        So it is:
Your service perfect freedom to enjoy
Fresh limitations. I've watched you in person
Wait for the light and relish the delay
Revving the engine up before you spurt
Out of the intersection.

                                        How all your servants
Compose their amorous scripts—scripts of confinement,
Scripts of displacement, scripts of delay, and scripts
Of more delay. Your own Fabrice so hankered
After the distance of his prison cell
He managed to regain it, for the sake
Of viewing her, the jailer's daughter, daily—
But at a window, but among her birds.
Of course they could not touch. In later life
They touched, they did touch, but in darkness only.

When I switched off my light I was dog-tired
But for some minutes held off sleep: I heard
The pleasant sound of voices from next door
Through windows open to the clement darkness.
A dinner for the couple one floor up,
Married today. I hardly had the time
Before falling away, to relish it,
The sociable human hum, easy and quiet
As the first raindrops in the yard, on bushes,
Heard similarly from bed. Chatting, the sounds
Of friendliness and feeding often broken
By laughter. It's consoling, Mr. Love,
That such conviviality is also
One more obedience to your behest,
The wedding bed held off by the wedding feast.

Good will within delay within good will.
And Cupid, devious master of our bodies,
You were the source then of my better rest.

—Thom Gunn

Understanding the volcano has encouraged a degree of optimism. One six-year-old girl, Sarah Sweeney, assured me, "Ash is nothing you can't handle." Many people I spoke with invoked the model of a pressure cooker—not at all an inaccurate example—to explain the volcano's inner workings. Standing at the bar in Andy's Village Place, a Salem restaurant long a favorite haunt of visiting rock stars which now doubles as an elementary school, a man named Peter declared, "That volcano is not going to blow. I'll tell you why: because it has enough vents to relieve the pressure." Another Montserratian, at another bar, in citing the need for the volcano to "vent," suggested that the British Navy should simply shell the lava dome. (Scientists are sure this wouldn't work, although ordnance has been used on a volcano before: the United States military has twice bombed lava flows on Hawaii's Mauna Loa, in attempts to redirect them.)

At the observatory, I met several bright young Montserratians who, like George Skerritt, had been trained as seismographers and field technicians, and had thereby gained an in-depth education in the art of volcano monitoring. One of them, Joseph Morris, who mans the seismic network, patiently explained how data are collected and analyzed, what various earthquake signatures recorded on the seismograph drums mean, and how he responds to them in periods of dangerous activity. Even though his work is exceedingly complex, and is obviously critical for the island's inhabitants, he maintained that he was just "a makeshift seismologist." Until the volcano decided to go "back to normal," he would "take every ashing day as it comes," he said.

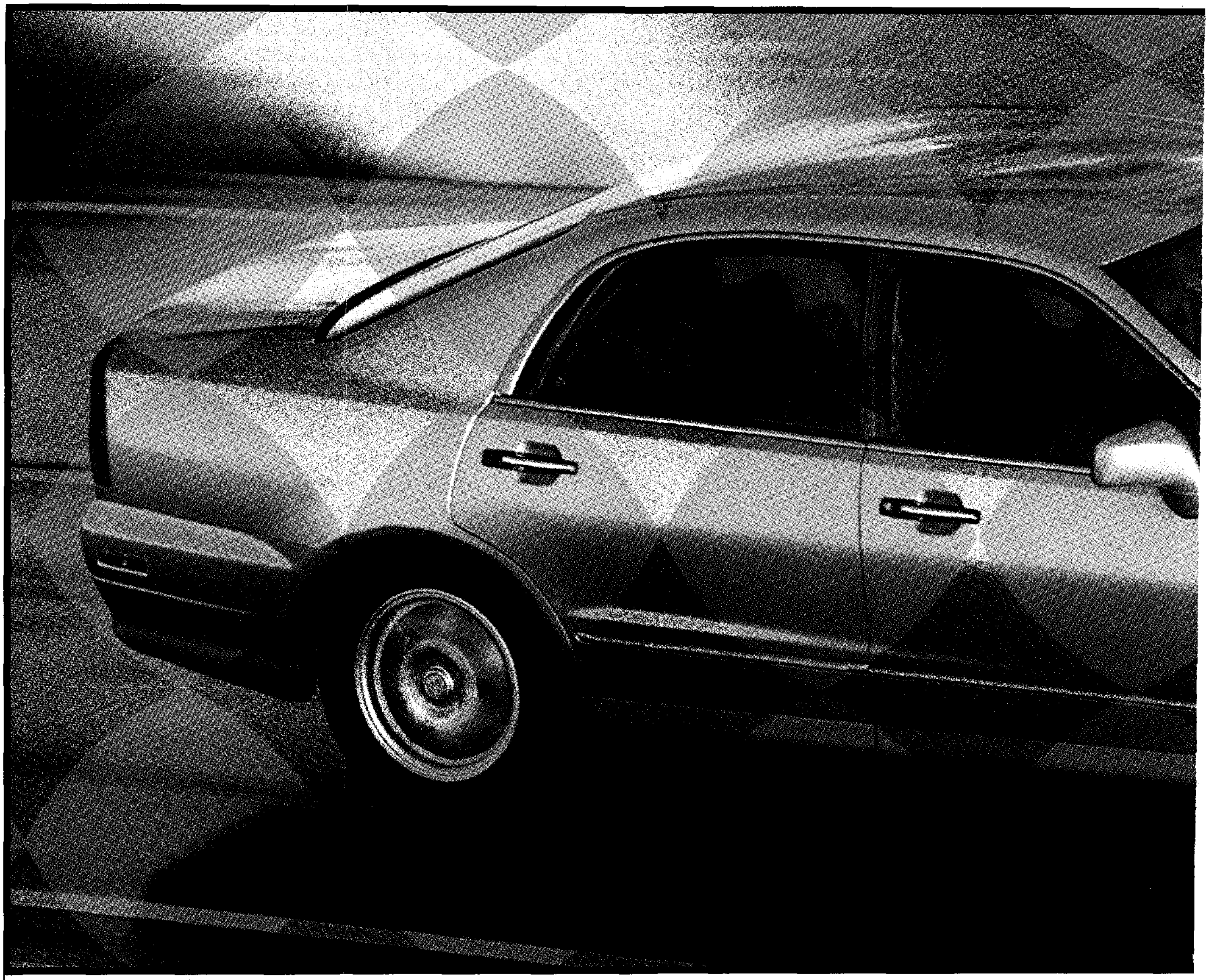
George Skerritt, as we watched the pyroclastic flows, had reflected on how the volcano had forever changed the lives of Montserratians. "Even if it was to go back to sleep, people would now be more aware of the existence of the volcano and its potentials than the generation before," he said. At least two young people he knew, he told me, have received scholarships to study geophysics and geology abroad. Their studies completed, they will come back to Montserrat as volcanologists.

To catch my flight home, I rode to the airport with a taxi-driver, Joseph Phillip, over a winding, heavily potholed road around the north end of the island. In early-morning darkness, the riotous chirping of amorous tree frogs rang out from the hillsides. To the northwest, the silhouettes of the islands Redonda and Nevis began to emerge. I asked Joseph what he felt about the tension and danger of Montserrat's situation. He shrugged and said, "Some people went to other islands, and they were hit by hurricanes. My wife and son went to St. Maarten, and they saw roofs being ripped from houses. Montserrat was just brushed. You can't run from trouble." But he also warned of Montserrat's predicament: "You can't wait for the government to feed you. People sit in shelters, play dominoes, walk about, day after day. We have to guard against becoming a nation of lazy people."

Despite their precarious situation, the Montserratians I met had not chosen to attribute any "motive" to the mountain's violence but instead seemed to be accepting it soberly and practically—perhaps in the hope of calming the volcano by example. A self-help guru might term this acceptance "owning your disaster." I mentioned George Skerritt's maxim—"Don't let it give you any pressure"—to Joseph. With a smile, he agreed that it was a good one, and said, "We've learned that we are also a strong people. As long as there is a little piece of land in the north, we're going to stay here. Those who left realized that it's worse living without the volcano than living with it."

In the airport gift shop I found a T-shirt with the logo "Pyroclastic Flow Montserrat" and a little plastic bag of something called Emerald Special Volcano Ash, with a printed explanation of the geology and chemistry of pyroclastic flows. This reminded me of something Chief Minister Osborne had told me when I asked whether he thought any good could possibly come from the eruptions. "Although we are suffering—and we are suffering frustration and hardship at the moment—Montserrat is certainly getting a lot of publicity," he said. "Maybe we can turn this into a big tourist attraction—not that we wanted to do it this way."

I recalled my day on the volcano with George Skerritt. After the episode under Farrell's Wall, George and I had descended from the mountain and headed for a sunny coastal bluff with a fine view of Antigua, to the east. There, in the company of several unimpressed goats, we stood and watched pyroclastic flows roll down the Tar River Valley and into the sea, forming a delta of steaming new land, while beautifully patterned ash clouds boiled up above them, thousands of feet in the air. If it is the fate of volcanoes to become tourist attractions, then Montserrat is sure to become an A-list destination for thrill-seekers. ♦



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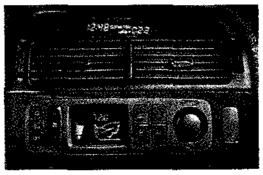

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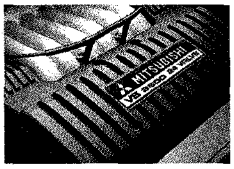

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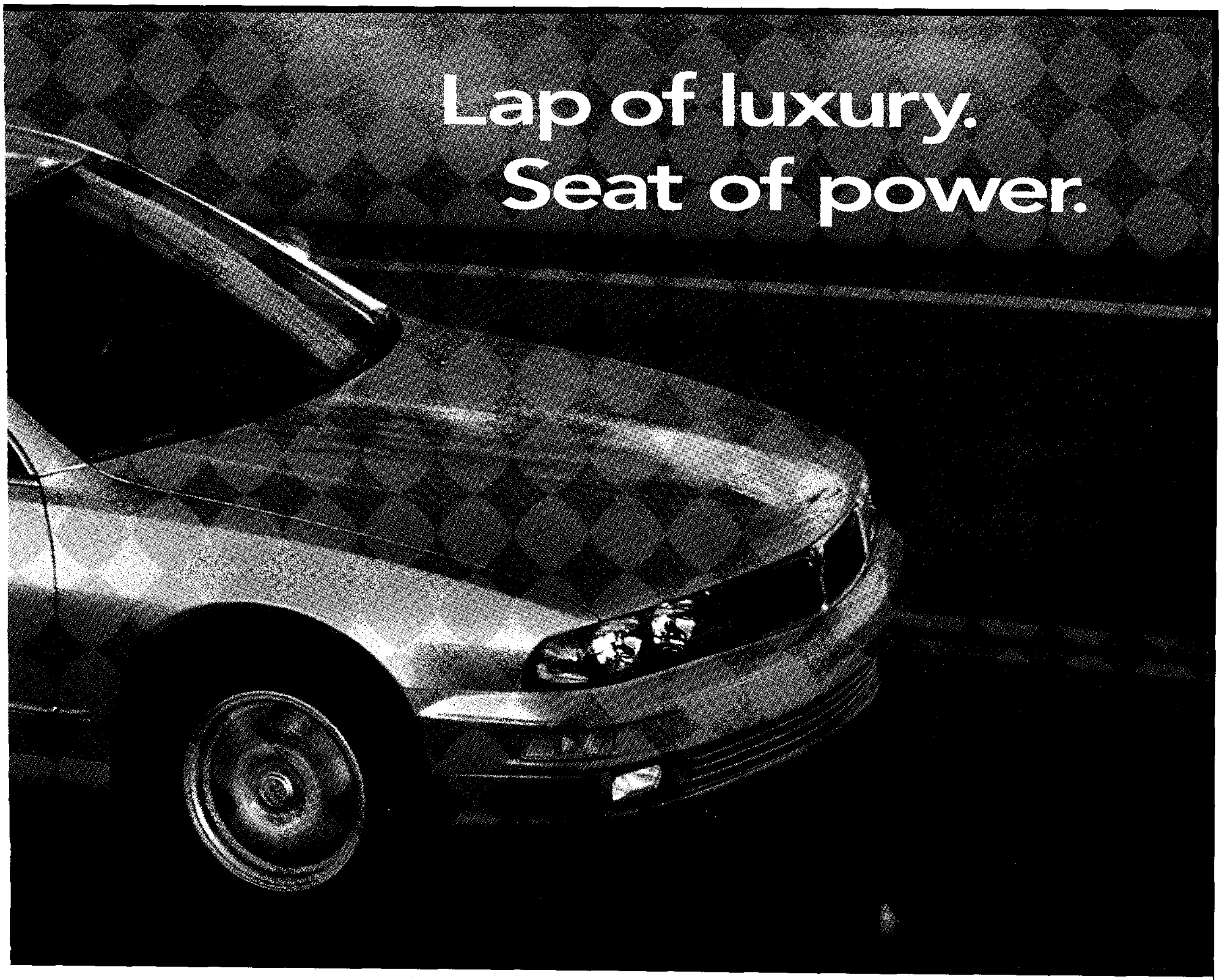

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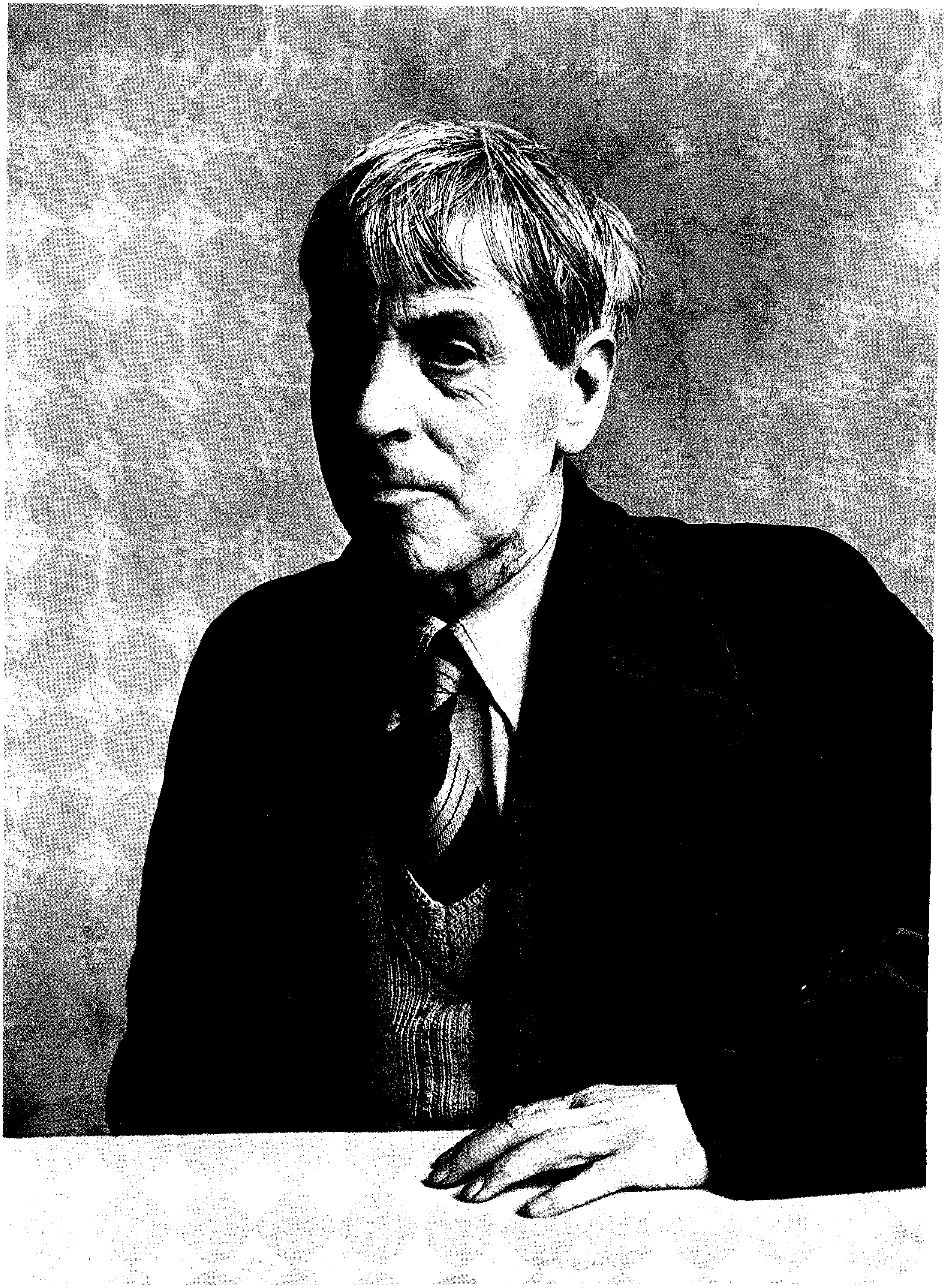

PROFILE

THE CHURCH OF ME

Before Francis Bacon, before Lucien Freud, there was Stanley Spencer. Why was a great English painter forgotten? A remarkable new play tells the story.

BY SIMON SCHAMA

Saturday, May 29, 1937. Maidenhead Registry Office, Berkshire. The wedding photograph: the groom is Stanley Spencer, a compact but explosive force of nature who has already produced some of the most memorably strange paintings in twentieth-century art and will go on to paint many more. He is wearing his favorite shapeless felt hat, which instantly transforms him into a toadstool pixie, twinkling and eager. Four days earlier, he divorced his wife of twelve years, Hilda Carline, also a painter. The new bride, her attention caught elsewhere, left hand carefully avoiding contact with the new husband, is Patricia Preece, aspirant artist, fashion plate, and lesbian. To her right is her live-in friend of many years, Dorothy Hepworth, tight-lipped, hands grimly clasped on her bag as she struggles to celebrate.

Patricia and Dorothy had appeared in Stanley's native village of Cookham at a time when Hilda was preoccupied with their small children and a sick brother in London. Patricia, exuding silky glamour (by Berkshire standards, anyway), seemed as alluring as Hilda was homely. "Her high heels and straight walk used to give me a sexual itch," Stanley later wrote to Hilda. For Patricia Preece, ensnaring the famous Stanley Spencer offered a chance for the financial security her wardrobe demanded and the possibility of slipstreaming her own work (or, more likely, Dorothy's paintings signed as hers) behind his renown. She put everything she had into the effort. Hilda wrote to Stanley's dealer, Dudley Tooth, that Patricia "vamped him to a degree unbelievable, except in cinemas. If he went to her house she always received him half or quarter dressed." The strategy paid off quickly and handsomely. Made to feel cruelly redundant, Hilda spent more time with her family in London. In 1935, Stanley agreed to transfer Lindworth, his Cookham house, to Patricia. A year later, Hilda, declaring to Stanley that "my desire for you is for your happiness in the way you want it," consented to a divorce.

The new marriage collapsed immediately into tragic farce. For Patricia, it was a necessary chore, rather like a long interview with an especially squalid bank manager; for Stanley, it was a nightmare of ungratified longing. Patricia and Dorothy spent the honeymoon together in a cottage in Cornwall, banishing Stanley to separate accommodation. He had hoped to keep Hilda as a creativity concubine, on demand whenever his brushwork flagged, and now he turned to her for consolation. Instead of smacking him, she stayed the night, but his suggestion that they should return to the Suffolk village where they had spent *their* honeymoon was not warmly received. Having been evicted from her house and her marriage, Hilda was not about to trade the position of wife for that of mistress, even with Patricia's permission.

In 1938, Patricia, who had graciously allowed Stanley to use studio space in the Cookham house, announced to him that her needs were such that she was obliged to let it. Friends and supporters of the now homeless painter found him lodgings in Swiss Cottage, ten minutes' walk from Hilda's family. Chastened and desolate, Stanley roamed the wilderness of his walkup flat. Instead of having both wives, he had neither. He decided to paint forty pictures, one for each day of Lent, representing Christ in the Wilderness. Eight were completed, the least elaborate and most affecting things he had ever done. A stocky, lumbering Saviour tenderly scrutinizes a scorpion in the palm of his hand, or

PHOTOGRAPH BY IRVING PENN

Stanley Spencer in London, 1950.

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rises from a surprisingly fertile crater (this is, after all, an English wilderness) like a lily, white-shrouded, his outstretched arms seeking the sun. Looking back on the wilderness series, Stanley wrote, "I loved it all because it was God and me, all the time."

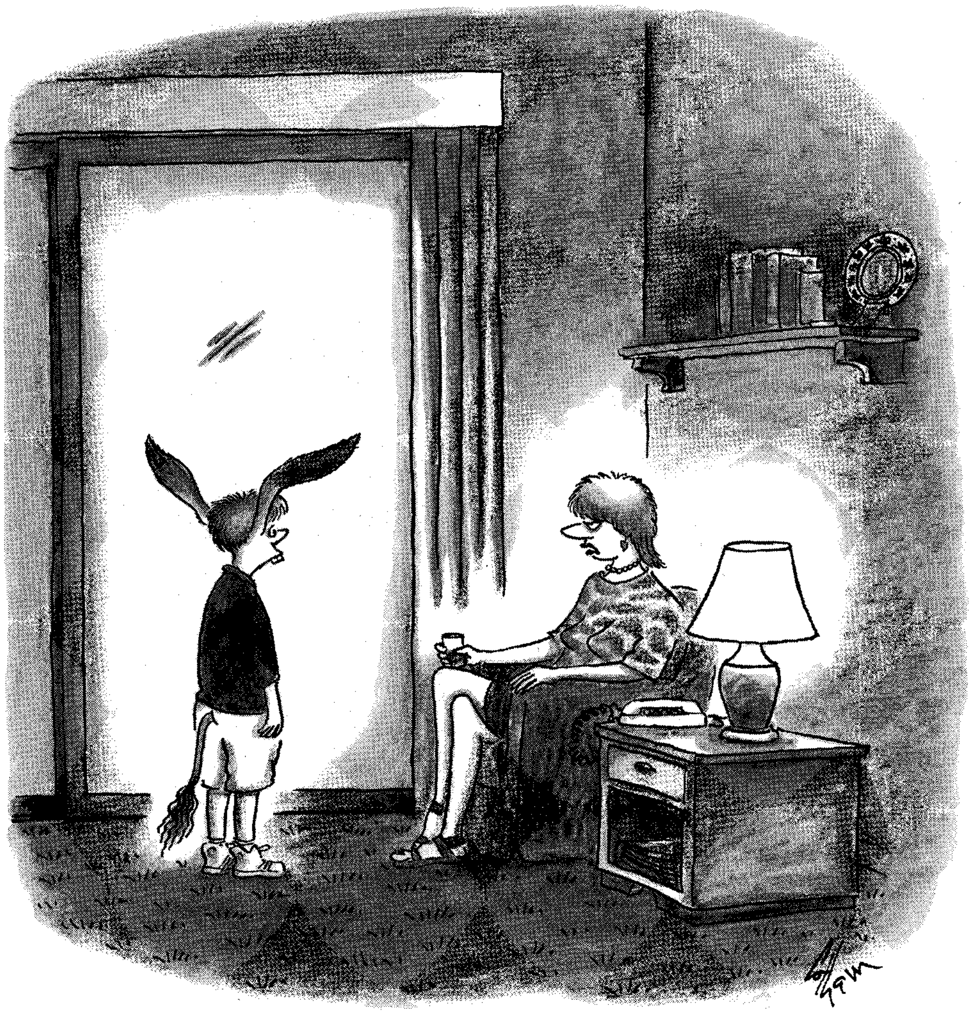
When Stanley Spencer showed up in October, 1938, at the house of the new director of the Tate Gallery, the maid opened the door to a dishevelled wreck, his coat fastened with a safety pin, and she reasonably assumed he was a tramp. Just two years before, in December, 1936, on the strength of a rare one-man show at his dealer's, Spencer had been hailed as a genius—an abnormal genius, one reviewer was careful to say, but a genius all the same. Despite the reservations about his eccentricity, there was a consensus that Spencer was an astounding original, who had somehow managed to reinvent native British painting, liberating it from the thrall of Picasso and European modernism. It was the raw energy of his work, its dismissal of abstract formalism, and its ravenous appetite for poetry, history, flesh and blood, place and prayer that so cheered the critics of Stanley Baldwin's little England.

All this changed during Spencer's time of troubles. His fusion of the sexual with the spiritual, the odor of sanctity with a whiff of the bedsheets, disconcerted a national culture that generally liked such things kept apart, thank you very much. After the Second World War, he was taken seriously again, but as an inimitable oddity rather than as a hero of twentieth-century British art. Only in the body works of Lucien Freud and Francis Bacon did he have any real progeny. And beyond Britain, especially in the United States, he disappeared from view, unknown and almost unexhibited.

Two events are about to make good this absurd neglect. A major survey of sixty of his works will open at the Hirshhorn Museum, in Washington, in the fall. And on February 20th Pam Gems's fiercely moving play "Stanley" opens at the Circle in the Square. For nearly three hours, audiences can sit right in the middle of Spencer's hopelessly tangled life and see one of the most astonishing acting performances of the last several decades—Antony Sher's incarnation as the painter. Impassioned, visionary, compulsive, lyrical, he is randy as a goat and pathetic as a child; incontinently garrulous; impossibly selfish.

At one point in the play, Stanley whines, "What I want to know is, why must a man have only one woman? . . . I suppose I must be polygamous if I want more than one wife but I don't see why that should be derogatory. I think it's a sign of intelligence." Earlier, he upbraids Hilda for failing as his muse by being preoccupied with the children: "The trouble is, there's nothing left for Stan!" Patricia, played with feline dangerousness by the brilliant Anna Chancellor, whispers into Stanley's ear precisely what he wants to hear: "You are an artist. Why not? You must have whatever you need. If what you need for happiness is women, women, women, Stanley, I'll get them for you."

Have we heard this before? Erotic egotism, once treated as an incidental (if deplorable) aspect of the creative temper, now threatens to become the organizing principle of art biography, to the point where an entire exhibition, "Picasso and Portraiture," could be conceived as an odyssey through the human wreckage of the painter's sex drive. Saturn, the god of melancholy, whose aura was once thought to govern the artistic muse, seems to have been replaced by the Satyr. It's true, of course, that the pantheon of painting is loaded with libidinous monsters, outrageously disingenuous in their pretense of engaging with their models as art objects, and thus exempting themselves from bourgeois norms of conscience. Two of the painters most admired by Stanley Spencer, Gauguin and Rossetti, both self-consciously at war with middle-class morality, were conspicuously carnivorous in their relationships with their models. Gauguin set up the pubescent Anna la Javanaise as his mistress in Paris; Rossetti



"Your father was a jackass."

HAWK-WATCHING

So as the hawk flies over the ridge's beak
you sail over me, under me, wing, shoulder,
jib, sheet, breath material as air, bird shadow
the sky's quick fingerprint, as if the god
of wind had just begun to sing, after a long silence,
a mute wandering, and put his hands just there,
and there, to keep his balance. His hands

are the hawk's black wings, and the bereft
stars that in a dream now fall on those green
hills, absolved, recalled, are the river's upper
reaches talking back, about a summer's day,
a paper boat that didn't sink. Your hands linked
are those great wings—I fall upward as I drink—
my head a nest of feathers on your back.

—CYNTHIA ZARIN

---

drove Lizzie Siddall to laudanum and suicide, then took his friend William Morris's wife, Janie, as model, muse, and lover.

The Hilda-Stanley-Patricia triangle is so powerfully caught in Pam Gems's play that it runs the risk of being taken for yet another formulaic contribution to the flourishing genre of painter-as-prick. But Gems is at pains to present Spencer's waywardness less as the calculation of a cynic than as the greediness of a perpetual child, sucking on nothing much naughtier than his own thumb. Spencer was unapologetic about this childishness, cultivating what he took to be its redeeming innocence; he wore schoolboy bangs his whole adult life. While he features himself in his erotic art almost as compulsively as Picasso, he appears not as the horny Minotaur but as little Stan, the prodigy as shorty, gawping, cradled, nuzzled, cuddled, or suckled by a parade of colossally enveloping Earth Mothers.

Paradoxically, while the nudes of Patricia, so disconcerting to his contemporaries, were unprecedentedly graphic in their anatomical precision (no crease, dimple, hair, or vein left unsurveyed), they startle because of the *distance* they interpose between perception and gratification. "He's drawn me all crooked," snaps the play's Patricia, and so, in a manner of speaking, he has. The erotic effect of one of the more alluring of the paintings, "Nude, Patricia Preece" (1935), is sabotaged by the artist's cramming her body into a brutally confined space, so that it resembles a cartilaginous reptile flattened against an aquarium tank, the head elastically dislocated from the torso. Twice in this series, Spencer inserts himself into the composition, but hardly as the bête noire of feminist art history, the lord of the penetrating gaze. In the most decisively alienated of the paintings, "Self-Portrait with Patricia Preece" (1936), Spencer is seen in rear profile, shoulder blades chalk-white but cheeks and neck ruddy with unassuaged passion, staring off past the supremely uninterested face of the beloved, the two of them trapped in precoital *tristesse*. In the notorious "Double Nude Portrait: The Artist and His Second Wife," Spencer has assembled heaps of what he described as "male, female and animal flesh," including a phallic shank end of raw mutton that is in livid contrast to Stanley's own penis, dangling pallidly, more in hope than in expectation, beside Patricia's midriff. Behind him an oil stove burns, the only note of warmth in a tundra of human bleakness. Stanley had written to Hilda (with his usual sensitivity), "The more severe and austere [Patricia is], the bigger the thrill. Every inch I gain with Patricia is real achievement—it is so extraordinary to get near *at all*." But the closer he got the more remote she became. These paintings proclaim the defeat of intimacy by proximity, the frustration of love by unsparing clarity of focus. Stan is the consumed, not the consumer, here, his mutton doomed to go forever uncooked.

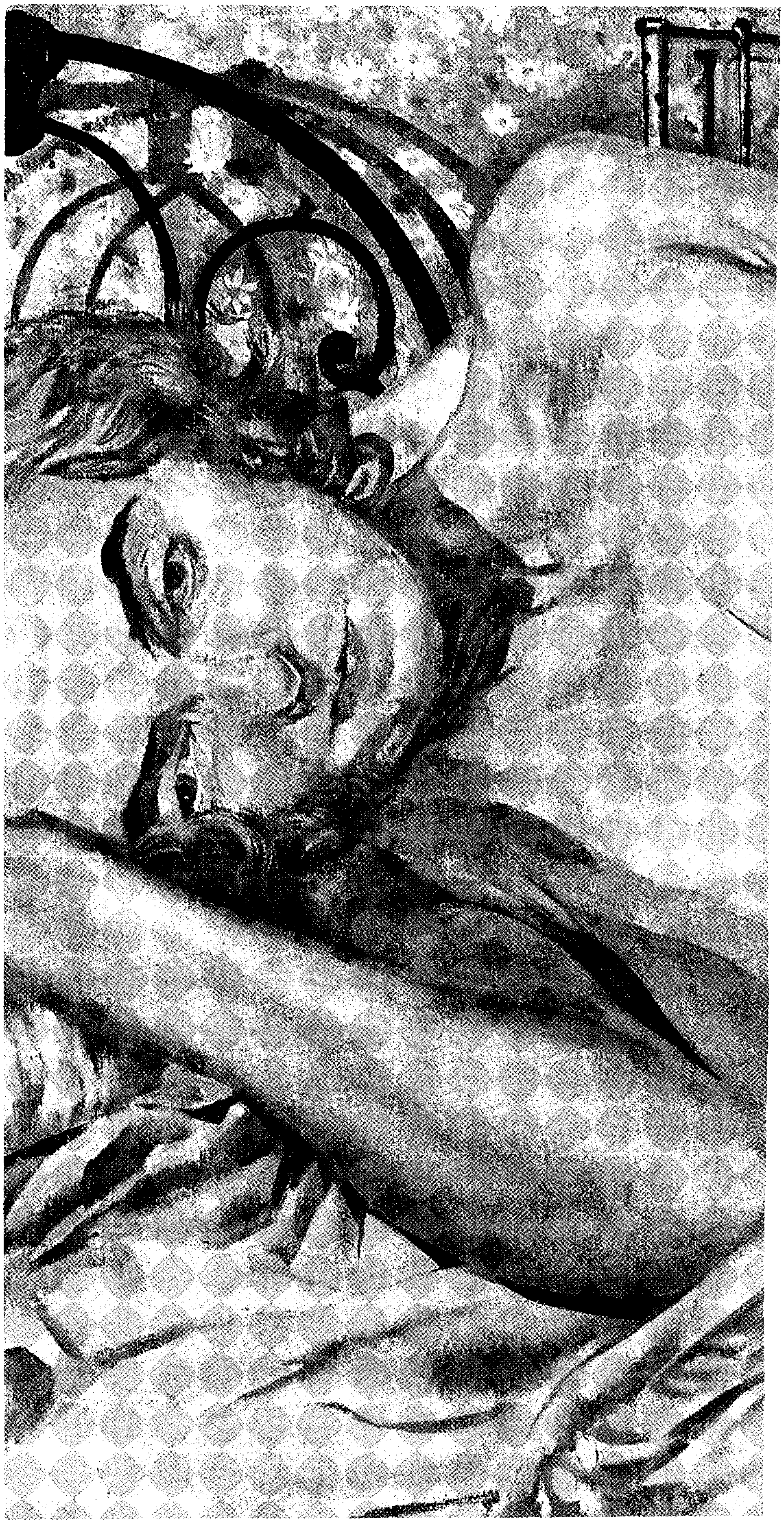
When the "Leg of Mutton Nude" was included as the sole British representative in a 1981 Pompidou Center exhibition devoted to figurative painting between the wars, it was shown alongside work by Otto Dix and other artists of the German New Objectivity, as though they were Spencer's closest artistic companions. But, as the artist himself was at pains to point out, it was precisely the dispassionate quality of the nudes that made them an anomaly in a career otherwise devoted to the painterly expression of passion, much of it fervently religious. Referring to the "Leg of Mutton," he wrote, "There is none of my usual imagination in this thing. It is direct from nature and my imagination never works faced with objects and things."

Perhaps the reason Spencer has suffered from neglect, at least outside Britain, is that in almost every important respect his work truculently resisted the received wisdom of modernism. While the patriarchs of twentieth-century painting were committed to essentialism, stripping away conventional outward forms to disclose an inner reality, for Spencer reality *was* surface, texture, skin. Where they were prophets of disembodiment, his art was copiously embodied. Where their art was based on compositional economy, his canvases revelled in figural glut, feverishly congested like the paintings of Bosch and Bruegel that so bewitched him. Where modernism hungered for the purity of science, Spencer thirsted for the purity of faith. The modernists cleansed their work of anecdote, incident, and textual allusion; Spencer couldn't get enough of them. Abstraction demanded meditation; Spencer's work is an invitation to the carnival. Most decisively of all, he rejected as barren narcissism modernism's insistence that art should be dedicated to investigating the constituents of its own autonomy. His technical gift he thought worthless, except as a means to a higher end. "My capacity to draw and paint has got *nothing* to do with my vision; it's just a meaningless, stupid habit," he wrote. Conversely, his own declared goal for art would have made the modern masters shake with mirth had they been paying him any mind. Art, Spencer affirmed, over and over, was the visual translation of epiphany, the proclamation of love on earth: "Love is the essential power in the creation of art. And love is not a talent."

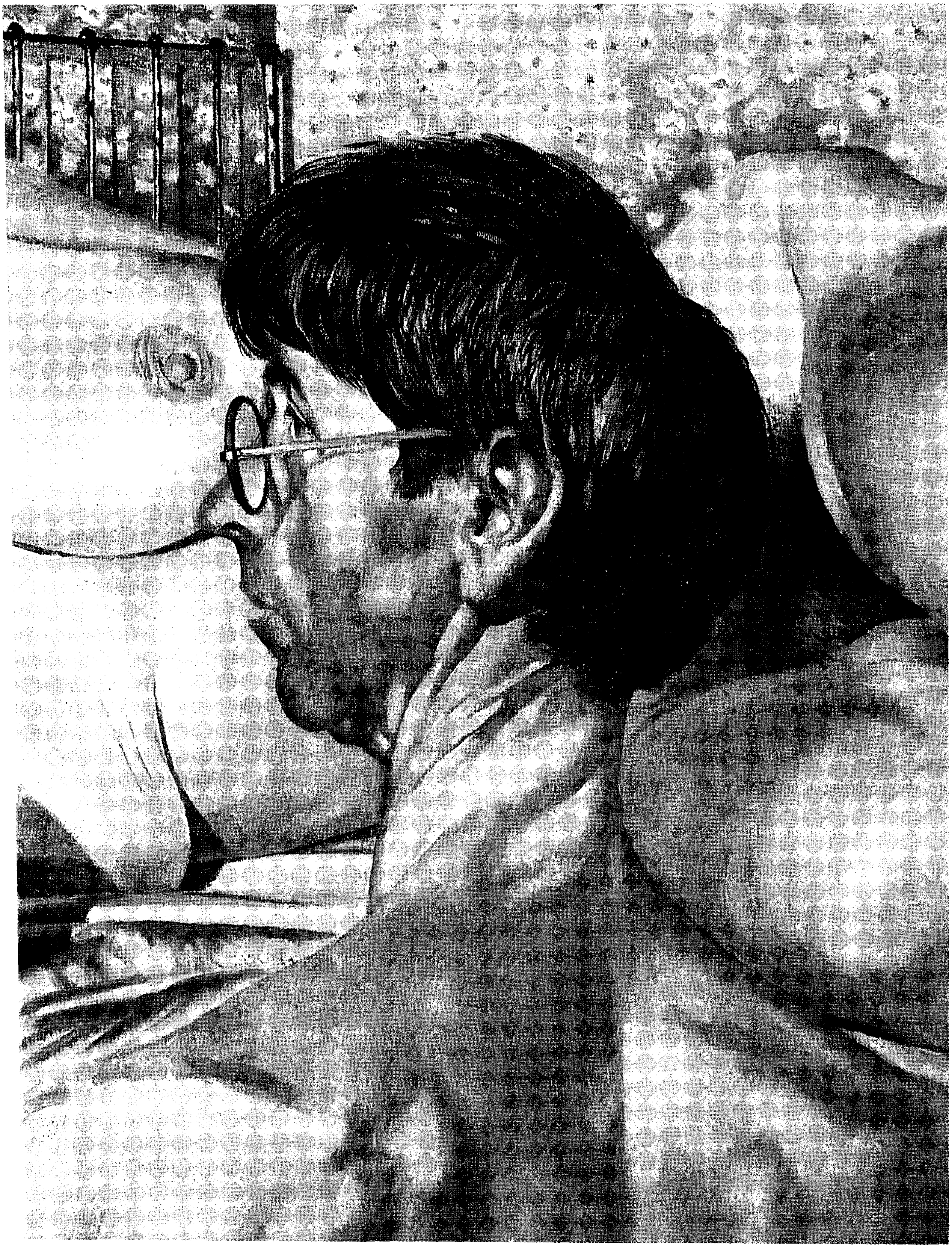
A further condition of Spencer's art that has obviously worked against international recognition is his insularity. His most important teachers were all adamantly, even chauvinistically, English. From the rowdy titans of the English graphic tradition—Hogarth, Rowlandson, and Gillray—he learned the seriousness of comedy, an affection for the grotesque, an appetite for narrative richness, and the skill to contain its elaboration through daring but rigorous draftsmanship. From Ruskin (who, had he but seen Spencer's educationally detailed nudes, might have saved his own marriage) he took the conviction that true "modern painters" could do no better than emulate the intricacy and integrity of late-medieval stonemasons and sculptors. Blake reinforced his intuition that bodily and spiritual rapture were one and the same. And from Samuel Palmer, the early-nineteenth-century bucolic visionary, and William Holman Hunt, the most blessedly weird of the Pre-Raphaelites, Spencer grasped the illumination that the acts of the Gospels still worked their sublime mysteries through the lanes and hedgerows of the English countryside.

ANY fool knew that paradise on earth was to be found in an English village. Spencer knew, still better, that Eden's coördinates situated it thirty miles up the Thames from Westminster, at Cookham. Lying in the belly of an S bend in the river, between Maidenhead and Marlow, Cookham was surrounded by water meadows, so that a small boy born in 1891 might still see the village as an island, moated off from the grinding highways of the wider world. It was a place of buttered scones and boatyards, smelling of river weed and breweries. For Stanley, it was peace but not quiet, since there were nine children at home. William Spencer—Pa, a paterfamilias beyond the dreams of Dickens—presided over the enormous brood. He had titled himself Professor of Music but his only academy was Cookham, where he played the church organ and gave piano lessons. Edward Marsh, one of Stanley's first patrons, who visited the "pullulating bosom" of the Spencer home, described Pa as "a tremendous talker, and frightfully pleased with himself, his paternity, his bicycling, his opinions, his knowledge, his ignorance."

All the children Did Something, often



"Self-Portrait with Patricia Preece" (1936).



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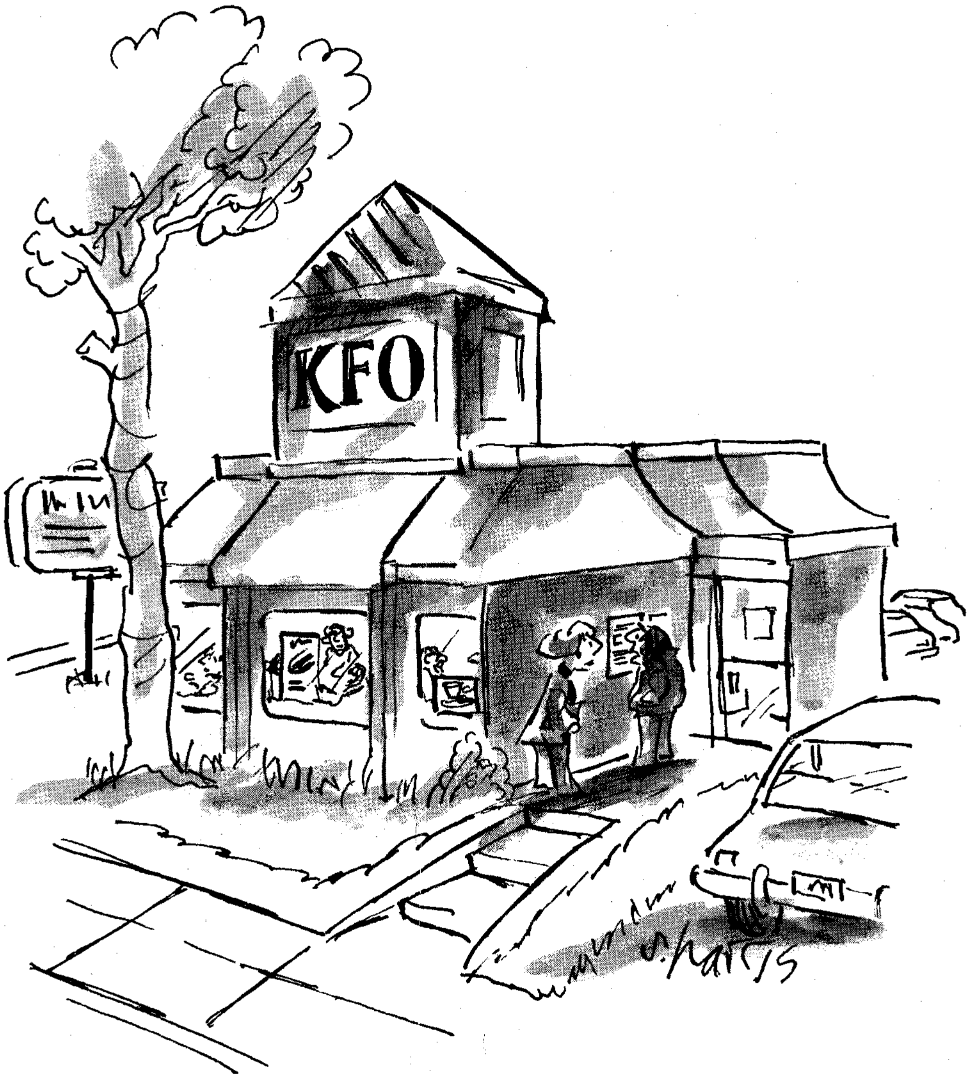


"Ostrich."

at the same time, one playing cello, another violin, Stanley pounding out Bach on the ivories. Since Pa had no faith in the public-school system, Stanley was educated by his sisters in a corrugated-iron hut next door. A lending library was run from their home, and Stanley, who rapidly developed into an unstoppable talker, read everything and anything.

One doesn't have to be Freud to see that the snug fit of the Spencers into their village hearth and home was not altogether cost-free for Stanley's progress to manhood. He spent a good part of that adulthood searching for a place as secure as his childhood bed. In one of the most intense of his early works, "The Centurion's Servant," Spencer makes a double appearance—as an agitated child-man, stretched out on the bed as if he were striding through the sheets, and as one of three figures gathered at the bedside in attitudes of prayer, impassively regarding his contorted alter ego.

"The Centurion's Servant" was both Gospel and autobiography. The ostensible subject was the episode related in Luke 7, when the centurion, thoughtfully aware of Christ's tight schedule, asks him not to trouble himself with a bedside visit to his sick servant, but, if it isn't too much of an inconvenience, might he perhaps manage a long-distance miracle? Originally, Spencer intended to paint two separate moments from the story, but later he reverted to the Old Master convention of collapsing separate episodes into a single frame. The figure on the bed, then, can be read as both in motion (the centurion's messenger approaching Jesus) and at rest (the ailing servant); or, alternatively, as the invalid prostrate with sickness *and* restored to health and vitality. But it also drew on the painter's memory of the family gathered by the bedside of a sick brother or sister, praying for recovery. Notwithstanding the nightmares that his brother Gilbert said regularly afflicted Stanley, the bed, with its pink, flounced, maternal skirt, was his ultimate refuge, his "just me happy" place.

For many of Spencer's contemporaries in Edwardian Britain and beyond, art was embraced as a liberating alternative to religion. It was the new church. For Spencer, on the other hand, it was the old church; and his unshakable belief in salvation through painting marked him out from the very beginning as a naïf. Yet when he got to the Slade School of Art, in 1908, his ingenuous zeal fitted right in with the avant-garde's interest in primitive religion. At Roger Fry's first Post-Impressionist show, at the Grafton Gallery, Spencer would have seen forty Gauguins, many of them the great Pont-Aven religious paintings. A number of his earliest efforts, in particular "Apple Gatherers" and "The Nativity," borrowed numinous colors and loaded, shimmering brushwork directly from Gauguin's Breton icons; statuesque figures in mysteriously erotic communication made an improbable migration from the tropics of Tahiti to the orchards of Cookham. On the strength of these enigmatic, symbolically charged works, Spencer was classified as belonging to the British neo-primitives, and a number of his paintings were included in Fry's 1912 follow-up show, along with works by Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell, where they hung opposite the likes of Cézanne and Picasso.

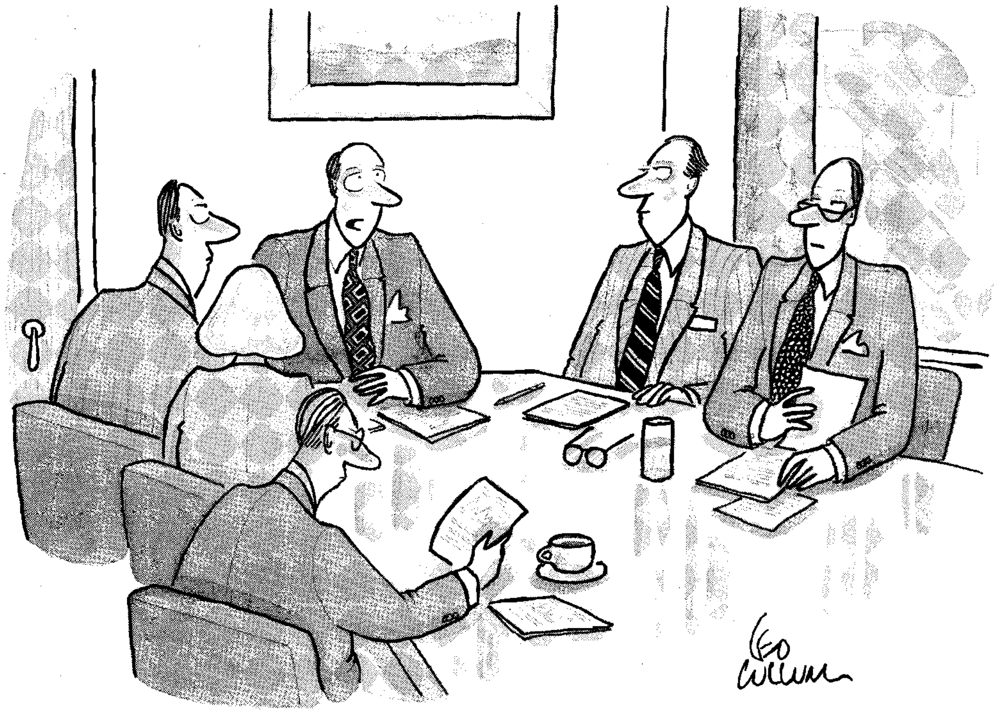
In reality, there was nothing "neo" about the simplicity of Spencer's pantheist vision. To the amusement of such critics as Fry and Paul Nash, he turned out to be the tribesman, not the anthropologist. He later complained, "What is so disconcerting to me is to find that people are not in the least moved by the sort of religious 'urges' I get." But when his Slade friends condescendingly gave Stanley the nickname Cookham they were shrewder than they knew, for, as he put it himself, "a person is a place's fulfilment as a place is a person's." To sustain the intensity and the peculiarity of his vision, Spencer needed to plant his easel not in Chelsea or Bloomsbury but back in his riverside idyll, in studio space rented for one shilling and sixpence a week. As Kenneth Pople's thorough biography points out, the more parochial Stanley's address the more fantastically his imagination flowered. "In a way all the things that happened at Cookham happened in the Bible," Stanley declared with utter sincerity, so it was natural, rather than allegorical, that Joachim should join the shepherds on Strand Meadow, and Christ be betrayed in the garden behind Fernlea schoolroom.

Cookham's malthouses, in particular, inspired some of Spencer's most original compositions, their tall white cowls transformed into the conical excrescences of an esoteric temple. The interior of a malthouse—strictly forbidden to the Spencer children, and therefore a place of irresistible magic—served Stanley as the setting for his "Last Supper" (sketched in 1915 but completed after the First World War). Christ, seated in front of a red brick wall that, cutting through the picture space, forces the figures to the extreme front of the painting, as if in a shallow relief, breaks the bread, flanked by the feminine figure of John, who is said by the Gospel to be resting against Jesus's breast, and whom Spencer, typically, paints with his eyes wide open, and by the neurotic Judas, a defensive hand clapped against his mouth. In the rhythmically orchestrated lines of apostles' heads on the left, their arms on the right, and, above all, the extraordinary congregation of feet that dominate the foreground, Spencer has begun to discover the elements of a completely original manner: modest in its homage to Giotto and the fresco painters of the early Renaissance, and audacious in its confident reinterpretation of sacred narrative. With visions like these crowding in on him, no wonder Spencer declared, "I never want to leave Cookham."

LEAVE he did, though, going off to war for King and Country in a Thames Valley downpour that turned his straw boater into a soggy ruin. Spencer signed up with the Royal Army Medical Corps, serving initially in a Bristol hospital that treated casualties from the Front, and from 1916 to 1918 in the highlands of Macedonia, where British and French troops were fitfully attempting to push back the Bulgarian and Austro-Hungarian occupiers. As a hospital orderly in Bristol, he pared dead skin away from mutilated survivors of the slaughter pits of Flanders, and kept the tea urns filled. In Macedonia, he wandered around hilltops strewn with tortoise shells bleached white by mortar fire and with letters dropped by Bulgarian soldiers in panicky retreat. He was a long way from Cookham. But his response to the apparently pointless savagery was not, like that of most of the "generation of 1914," fury born of reflection. He made sure to nurse his composure by omnivorous reading—Shakespeare, Milton, Blake, Keats—and, when he could, heated debates on painting and music. Mainly, though, he kept sane by keeping busy, plunging energetically into the routine work of the Medical Corps—swabbing floors, hauling the wounded to dressing stations on mule stretchers, decorating the sign for the sergeants' latrine with painted flowers. It was a vision of God revealed in Augustine's "Confessions" that most comforted and inspired Spencer, not the deity who, to so many outraged minds, had gone conspicuously AWOL from the trenches but God as eager beaver: "Ever busy, yet ever at rest. Gathering yet never needing; bearing, filling, guarding, creating, nourishing, perfecting; seeking, though thou hast no lack."

It was this image of the Almighty as both non-stop busybody and tent of repose that Spencer eventually transferred to his war paintings, to my mind the most powerful art to emerge from the carnage of the Great War. "Travoys with Wounded Soldiers Arriving at a Dressing Station at Smol, Macedonia" was commissioned for the British Ministry of Information but has nothing to do with propaganda. Its closest kinship is with an Adoration of the Magi, albeit with four stretcher cases lined up at right angles to the picture plane and converging along the line of perspective toward a brilliantly lit interior space, no manger but holy nonetheless, where white-coated angelic figures minister to a childlike figure. Even the animal detail—four sturdy mules, seen from the rear and stylized like the horses in another of Spencer's favorite paintings, Uccello's "Battle of San Romano"—recalls the creatures present at the Nativity, their ears attentively pricked and sharply outlined against a window bathed in supernal light.

Completed in 1919, "Travoys" brought Spencer a little fame and a little fortune: two hundred pounds. As a result of its success, he was asked, four years later, by the sister of an officer who died of an illness contracted in Macedonia to compose a series of works commemorating that campaign. "What ho, Giotto!" was his famous response as he conceived a cycle of



"The employees have to assume a share of the blame for allowing the pension fund to become so big and tempting."

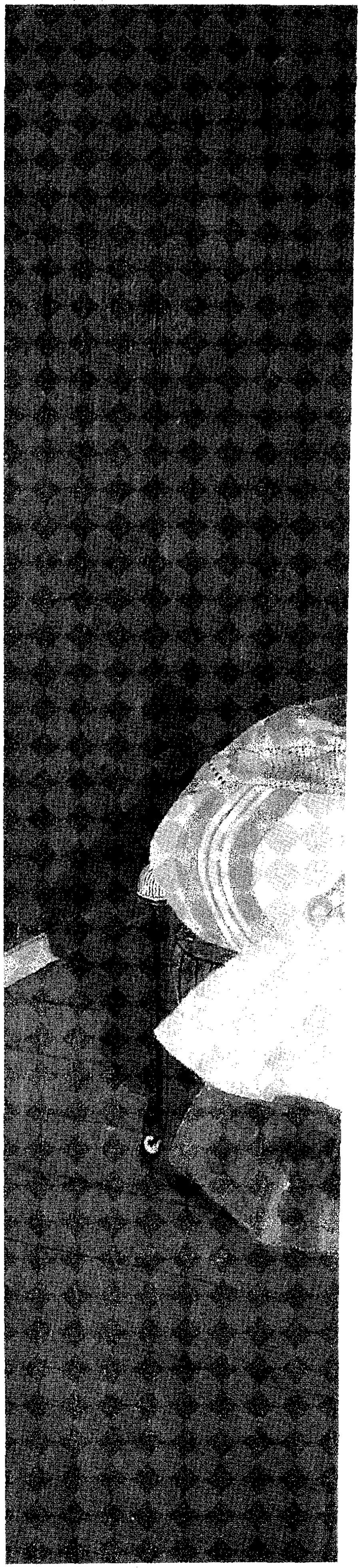
paintings that, like the Arena Chapel frescoes in Padua, could be read programmatically but whose several parts would resolve into a coherent whole, building to a climactic work at the visual center, "The Resurrection of Soldiers." In one respect, Spencer was even more fortunate than Giotto: his patrons were so impressed with the preliminary sketches that they had a chapel built to house the series.

"It is as though a Pre-Raphaelite had shaken hands with a Cubist" was one verdict on the Burghclere Chapel murals. But, while Spencer's organization of narrative detail within a strongly decorative arrangement (wildflowers everywhere) was somewhat reminiscent of Millais or Ford Madox Brown, the analogy sells him short. A more accurate description would be a marriage of the stylized forms and manipulated perspective of the fresco with an arsenal of twentieth-century idioms. Though Spencer hotly denied any debt to contemporary art, the cylindrical rhythms of "Filling Tea Urns" are kin to Léger; the ghostly figures in "Scrubbing the Floor," trapped between a dark corridor and a glossy yellow wall, echo Chirico's surrealist dream world. The borrowings, though, are trivial compared with the profound originality of the cycle, packed with touches of inspired Spencerian mischief: the obscured feet of a foreground figure in "Washing Lockers" displaced to the bootlike iron feet supporting a blazing-scarlet bathtub; Stanley as Saviour, his arms outstretched, holding the corners of the sheet as he makes a bed, amid soldiers who are neatly tucked up, as if the barracks had been transformed into the Cookham nursery.

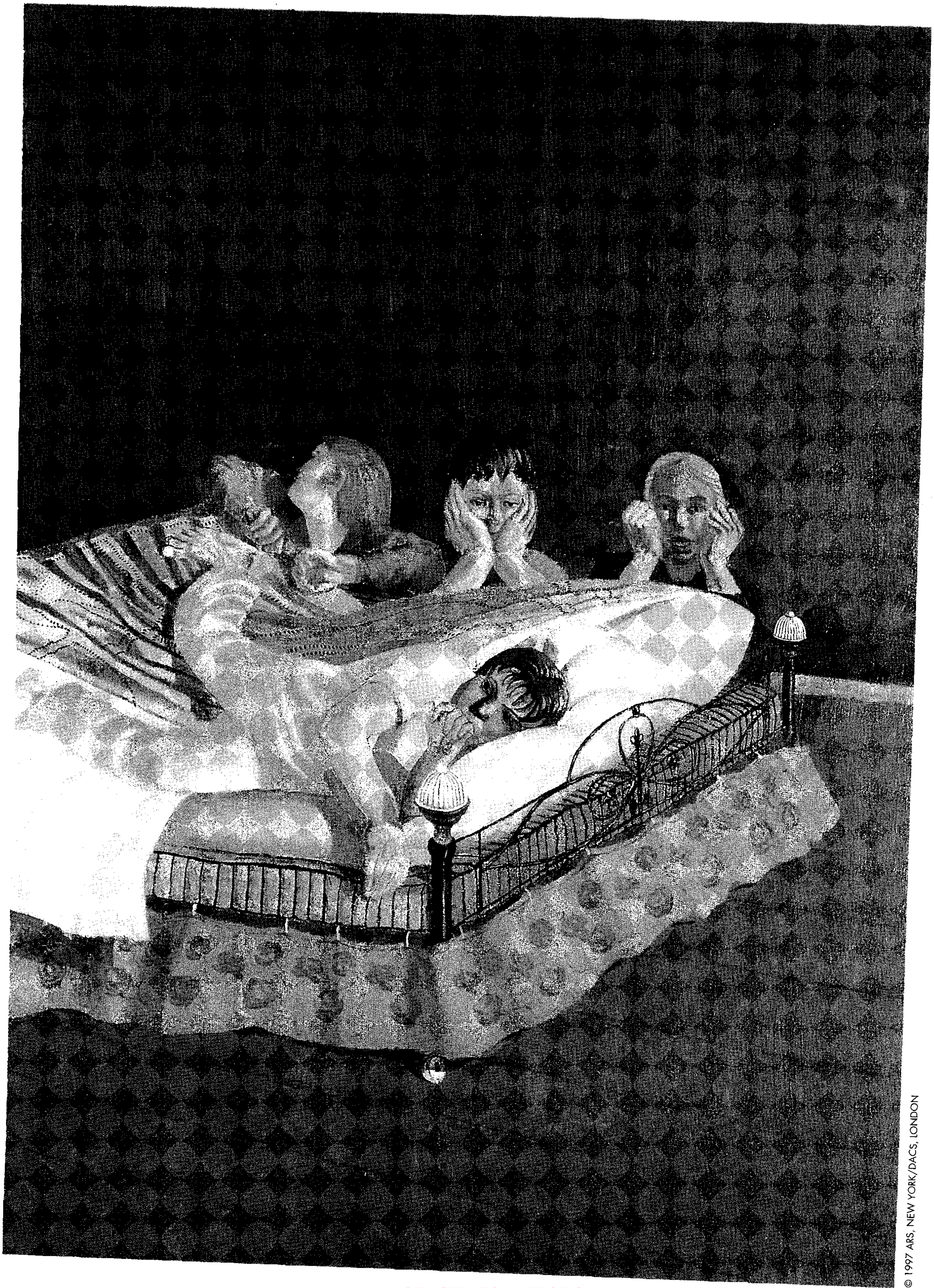
For the great altarpiece of "The Resurrection of Soldiers," Spencer turned to Bruegel's apocalyptic "Crucifixion." Like Bruegel, he shrank the ostensible protagonist of the painting—Christ bundling up crosses—into the background, while maintaining his narrative centrality by keeping him close to the vanishing point. The center of the painting is dominated by two white mules rising from the tomb, twinned like heraldic supporters, their necks craned to observe the Saviour tidying up behind them. "They awake to the loads of hay waiting for them," Spencer wrote. "I am sure this would convince them that the Resurrection had taken place!" At their right, Christ appears again, ensnared in the barbed wire that serves as his crown of thorns. In front of the mules, an avalanche of crosses descends through the foreground and, by a brilliant optical illusion, out beyond the picture space into the interior of the chapel itself—an invasion of the beholder's convenient privacy by the irreversible force of historical tragedy. It is as though a sacred earthquake had shaken the battlefield and from the fissures soldiers had emerged, not jubilant but wearing the same expressions of astonishment, ruefulness, and resignation they wore at the moment of being cut down on the field of battle.

STANLEY himself had been reborn in 1925, when (after proposing seven times and breaking off the engagement six) he finally managed to marry Hilda Carline and experience his "union with you . . . my union with the world." Since he was Stanley Spencer, it wasn't quite enough to celebrate this sexual epiphany with, say, a private portrait. Only the vast "Resurrection, Cookham," nine feet by eighteen, set in the kind of churchyard that Spencer's hero of holy erotics, John Donne, had called "the holy suburb of heaven," would do. As an anthem of rapture, the painting goes on and on and on, rather like a deflowered virgin compulsively inserting the name of the beloved into casual conversation with a third party. Before a friezelike line of "prophets," including Moses, who emerge from their tombs rather lazily, as if getting out of upended bathtubs, Hilda and Stanley appear in manifold guises: Stanley laid out on a folded tomb that resembles a half-open book; Renaissance Stanley, nude and virile; Stanley's head strangely surmounting Hilda's body, as though marriage had grafted the two together; Hilda in bridal white; Hilda half submerged in grass, her face pressed to a spousal sunflower; and, most peculiar, Hilda as Christ, enthroned beneath an immense arbor of white roses, with a homuncular baby Stan, naked and cradled in the crook of her left arm. "Eat me, darling," he had written on the back of a drawing of Hilda. "Let me become you. In the midst of your belly I cry out my love for you."

The London *Times* called "The Resurrection, Cookham" "the most important picture painted by an English artist in the present century," and it was bought by the Tate for a thousand pounds. But seventy years later it seems nowhere near as suc-



"The Centurion's Servant" (1914).

© 1997 ARS, NEW YORK/DACS, LONDON

cessful as the Burghclere murals in marrying the epic with the domestic, or in pulling together a mass of symbolically laden detail into a compositionally satisfying whole. Spencer could be briskly critical of artists who lacked narrative discipline—Michelangelo, for one—but his own effort at heroic allegory suffers from precisely the additive quality he faulted in others, never managing to transcend an inventory of his obsessions. When Hilda gently implied that self-importance was what led him to work on this scale, he turned on her with "choking rage."

Reigning supreme among his *idées fixes* was the conviction, relentlessly exhibited, that sexual experience was the gateway to salvation, and that fleshly and spiritual ecstasy were not just closely connected but the same thing. "God speaks eloquently through the flesh," he wrote. "That's why he made it." This idea was not exactly new, but Spencer felt the need to announce his erotic pantheism to the world, as if it were the religious equivalent of the Theory of Relativity. In this respect, as in many others, he was simply reiterating—more endearingly, perhaps—the proclamations of D. H. Lawrence and Eric Gill. Like them, Spencer, despite the best efforts of Christian missionaries, believed that non-European cultures had managed to retain their instinctive sense of the holiness of copulation; and the Hindu temple sculpture at Khajuraho, with its populous and versatile performances, only reinforced his faith that the road to Nirvana was strewn with innocent promiscuity.

Hence the Patricia fiasco; but also two large canvases, "Love on the Moor" and "Love Among the Nations," in which an elaborate chain of figures do their best to strengthen the bonds of multicultural intercourse. "Love Among the Nations" is particularly embarrassing, not because of the epidemic of foreplay that has broken out among its cast of characters but because of the childishly racist quality of its fantasies: heavily muscled black men or naked Negresses doing their laborious best to drive the washed-out but titillated Occidentals into states of carnal rejuvenation. It is as if the official Peoples of the World style obligatory in the lobbies of international peace organizations had been redesigned by Lady Chatterley.

Even paintings on this scale were not quite big enough to match the grandeur of Spencer's ruling passion. Nothing short of an entire building, bigger than the Burghclere Chapel, would do to house his manifesto on the union of body and soul. In the late twenties and the thirties, he began planning what he called his Church-House: a hybrid of a domestic and an ecclesiastical structure that would have at its center a formal nave and crossing but would also incorporate side chapels, clinically characterized as "cubicles," in which the worshipper could contemplate the many stages of Stanley Spencer's quest for the orgasmic grail. "A man raises a woman's dress with the same passionate admiration and love for the woman as the priest raises the host on the altar," he wrote. Accordingly, there would be a Patricia Chapel, a Hilda Chapel, and even an Elsie Chapel, devoted to the maid at Lindworth, whose legs, seen as she pegged out the washing, became cheerfully fetishized by her tirelessly lubricious employer. A passageway connecting the central church space with the cozy domestic rooms would be adorned with the six Patricia nudes, along with a series of "Beatitudes" and "Domestic Scenes."

Though the "Beatitudes," with their grotesque and even deformed figures displayed in poses of amorous connection, were perhaps the most universally criticized of Spencer's works, they are actually among his most bizarre and original paintings. Each represents a moment of amorous stimulus—"Contemplation," "Desire," and so on—but pairs a spectacularly incongruous couple. In "Contemplation," for example, a rubber-limbed Stanley leans, hypnotized, on the shoulder of a burly inamorata whose monstrously elongated arms end in overgrown chicken claws. "Desire" features Stanley reduced to a pathetic mannikin caressing the arm of a colossally bulbous woman, whose breasts descend like slowly deflating balloons inside her lurid floral-print dress.

Comparisons with Renaissance grotesques or the most aggressive nightmare creations of George Grosz are beside the point. For Spencer, the series was a hymn to the truism that beauty lies in the eye of the beholder, and that the passion stirred by the ordinary and the ugly was just as moving as that stirred by the perfectly chiselled. As a result, he could never comprehend why the "Beatitudes" affronted even his admirers, let alone the wider view that these paintings were the product of a mind unhinged by indiscriminate lust. Nor, for that matter, could he understand the failure of a pa-

"Oh, Sophie. I almost called you the other day."

tron to come forward and sponsor the Church-House, as had happened with Burghclere. After all, since "I like my own life so much that I would like to cover every empty space on a wall with it," it stood to reason that someone, somewhere, must share this unlimited enthusiasm for the Gospel According to Stanley.

No one did, except Hilda, who had become a devout Christian Scientist. Though she refused to return to Spencer's bed or board, she remained devoted to him in every other way. Through all the Patricia years and beyond, when Spencer had fallen seriously out of fashion and was forced to churn out landscapes to make ends meet, she anointed his ego with admiration. They wrote to each other frequently, frantically, and at incredible length, some of the letters running well over a hundred pages. In 1942, Spencer worked up an old drawing of her into a painting that (in sharp contrast to the Patricia nudes) is one of the tenderest things he ever achieved. Though he had brutally wounded her, throughout the forties he continued to insist that she was his true communion, his sacrament, his altar, his Holy Grail. (The Cult of Hilda did not, of course, rule out periodic sojourns in the alternative shrines of a Daphne and a Charlotte.) In any case, as Hilda pointed out sadly, all this mutual adoration came too late. In the forties, while Spencer was working as a war artist, doing scenes of shipyard life at Port Glasgow and flirting with the wife of a local art teacher, Hilda wrote, "There seems to have been tragedy throughout our marriage. When there should have been complete happiness, it was never quite so," and, in a blacker mood, "Physically and mentally I am going under. There are so many degrees of dying. What you are doing is nevertheless a degree of murder." In 1950, she died, of cancer.

"Why don't I get a job—then we can continue this discussion in my office."

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IN 1958, Spencer painted his last "Crucifixion," a piece of shrieking savagery, with Pa Spencer in a swimsuit standing in for the tortured Christ, and two leering executioners, nails between their teeth, witnessed by a youthful Stanley. At the foot of the Cross, the prostrate Mary Magdalene seems to have Hilda's features and wears a skirt with the same checked pattern as the executioner's trousers.

But by 1958 there was no longer any reason for Spencer to see himself as either martyr or murderer. Attempts to prosecute him under Britain's obscenity laws had been abandoned, and instead of being crucified he had been dignified as a C.B.E. and a Knight of the Realm. Though he claimed to hate the work, he continued to turn out landscapes and portraits of the Great and the Good: Oxbridge dons, boardroom industrialists, and justices of the peace. His work hung in the Tate Gallery and in the Fitzwilliam Museum, in Cambridge. He had become, in spite of a lifetime of un-British self-advertisement, an institution.

That year, my father took me to Cookham. It was, he told me, an obligatory stop on the Thames-side tour of Great British Culture. We had already done Hogarth at Chiswick, Pope at Twickenham; and had taken our leave of Turner at Maidenhead. Cookham still smelled comfortingly of cups of tea and pints of bitter, and along the riverbank children were busy emptying bagfuls of bread crumbs down the throats of mallards. The Wesleyan chapel, where the nine Spencer children had raised their voices and Stanley had felt a kind of pious clamminess that made him believe that somewhere there was a warmer, friendlier Jesus, was now filled with his paintings. "Hello, the village fête seems to have got out of control," my father volunteered as I stared hard at the assortment of bodies curled about the tombstones. "It's a little much, isn't it?" I said, unsure whether I meant the piety or the profanity. "Oh, it's just Stan," my father said, as if he had been a lifelong chum of the painter. "Just Stan having a bit of fun."

There's no doubt that Spencer deserves to be much better known, and both Pam Gems's play and the Hirshhorn exhibition will bring him long-overdue recognition. But to rank him among the movers and shakers of twentieth-century painting seems a pointless exercise, for his enduring virtue was his unforgettable peculiarity. "It isn't that he is consciously or intentionally good or bad, or intentionally anything," the wise Hilda wrote, "for he *is* the thing that so many strive for and he only has to *be* and a sermon is preached. . . . Stanley's home seems to be the whole world." So let's not talk Picasso here. For when someone at the Slade asked him what he thought of Picasso his answer was "I don't know. I've not got beyond Piero della Francesca." ♦

A REPORTER AT LARGE

SUSAN McDOUGAL'S SILENCE

Why won't she talk?

BY JAMES B. STEWART

THE Sybil Brand Institute for Women occupies a hilltop just off Interstate 10 east of Los Angeles, about a forty-minute drive from the Brentwood house where Susan McDougal once shared quarters with the conductor Zubin Mehta, his wife, Nancy, and their dog, Taras, a borzoi. Approached by a long, winding drive through scrub-covered hills, the institute serves as Los Angeles County's jail for women, and Susan McDougal has been housed there since December 17th, the day before she appeared in a Santa Monica courtroom for a pretrial hearing on charges of embezzling more than a hundred and fifty thousand dollars from the Mehtas.

Susan McDougal, a partner with Bill and Hillary Clinton in the failed Whitewater land venture, is not in jail because she was convicted last summer on four felony counts brought by the Whitewater independent counsel, Kenneth Starr. Nor is she there because of the Mehta charges, for which she posted bail and has yet to undergo trial. Susan, unique among the Sybil Brand inmates, is in jail on civil-contempt charges, for refusing to answer questions before the Whitewater grand jury in Little Rock.

After I decided to seek an interview with her, the office of Kenneth Starr was instrumental in arranging my visit. On January 16th, after also obtaining permission from her lawyer in Houston, the Santa Monica district attorney's office, the United States Marshals Service, and prison officials, I was admitted to Sybil Brand for a one-hour interview with Susan. Prominent signs warned would-be visitors sternly against carrying weapons. Such prospective visitors, some of whom waited for two hours or more, formed a long line in the shade of a concrete awning. A uniformed deputy behind a murky glass partition periodically buzzed them through a gate in the chain-link fence. Within the complex, Susan occupied a cell measuring approximately six feet by nine. Her meals were brought to her on a tray. She was allowed to place one twenty-minute collect phone call per day, and could have one visit. Visitors were separated from her by a transparent barrier and could speak to her only on a phone, also for twenty minutes. All this was ostensibly for Susan's protection, since at that time she was being kept apart from the regular inmates, many of whom had been convicted of violent crimes.

A guard escorted me through two heavy steel-barred doors, which clanged loudly as they closed behind us. I was shown to a small, glass-walled private room, where Susan was waiting. As I entered, she placed her wrists, which were handcuffed, on the table, where they could be seen by the guard.

Susan said that Sybil Brand was by far the worst of the three prisons she'd been in since her contempt citation, largely because of her almost total isolation. She was wearing standard-issue prison garb—a kimono-type dress of a faded red. She had a small plastic I.D. bracelet around one wrist and wore no makeup; her hair was not dishevelled but looked badly cut. She had lost weight since I last saw her, in May of 1995, in Los Angeles, but looked better than she had after her sentencing, back in August, when, her face puffy from crying, she'd been photographed going to prison wearing a short skirt and shackles.

I remarked that I'd recently visited her former husband, Jim, now back in a mobile home in Arkadelphia after debriefing by the independent counsel over a period of four months.

"How is he?" Susan asked.

Jim seemed healthier, I told her, more vigorous, and more relaxed than he had shortly after his trial last summer.

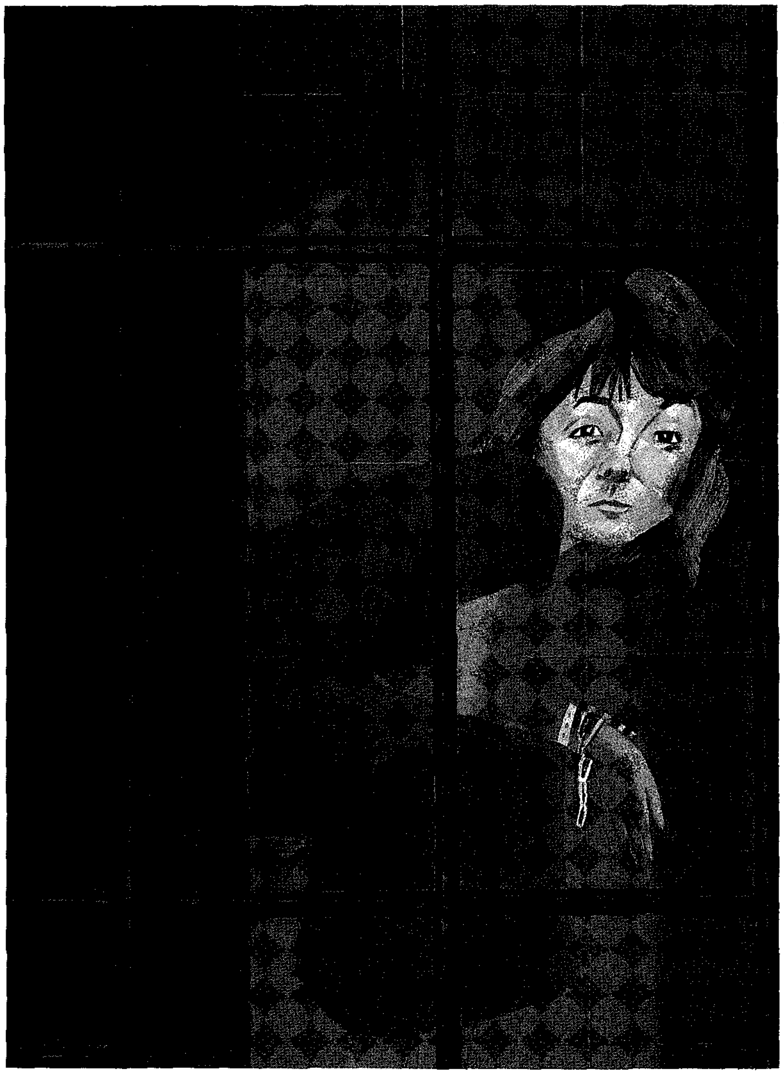
Susan seemed relieved about his health. "I was worried that that would have some sort of deteriorating effect on him, because I think it always does, when you're doing something so against the grain," she said, referring to his coöperation with the Starr prosecutors. "He started telling me, 'Well, looks like I'm going to have to make my deal,'" Susan recalled. "I said, 'Well, you know, Jim, I can't be a part of that, but I understand.'"

Word from Susan that she would be willing to coöperate with the Whitewater grand jury would immediately end her imprisonment, yet so far Susan has refused to assist an investigation that she considers a political witch-hunt, a belief fuelled by articles that raised questions about Starr's impartiality. Called before the grand jury in Little Rock on September 4th, after her felony convictions, with a grant of immunity protecting her from further prosecution for anything except perjury, Susan was asked by the associate independent counsel, W. Ray Jahn, "To your knowledge, did William Jefferson Clinton testify truthfully at your trial?" Susan gave no answer. She told me that she knew then she would be immediately sent to prison, and that she has come to terms with the prospect that she will spend eighteen months in jail—the maximum term for civil contempt. She suggested that prison isn't much worse than her life had become: "It—life—had become equivalent with hell."

THE consequences of Susan's silence are enormous: to herself, to the independent counsel's investigation, to the Clintons, perhaps even to the Presidency. The Whitewater investigation has expanded to many subjects beyond the Clintons' and the McDougals' original Whitewater land investment. Hillary Clinton remains under investigation for other matters. Last week, Starr added two trial lawyers to his staff, and he informed the court that Jim McDougal's coöperation had yielded a "voluminous" amount of material. However, without Susan the inquiry into the President's possible involvement in illegal activity in Arkansas appears stymied. After three years, nine guilty pleas, three convictions, two acquittals, and millions of taxpayer dollars, the only evidence that has become public linking Bill Clinton to any crime is testimony by a former judge and admitted felon named David Hale. At the Whitewater trial last spring, Hale testified that Clinton, while governor of Arkansas, encouraged him to make a loan that turned out to be fraudulent. Hale claimed the loan was discussed at a meeting with Jim McDougal and Clinton at which, according to Hale, Clinton said, "My name cannot show up on this." In his videotaped testimony, the President denied attending any such meeting, making any such statement, or knowing anything about the loan.

Although Jim McDougal, like Clinton, testified that no such meeting took place, he has now changed his story, and he has told Starr that the meeting did occur much as Hale testified. McDougal's constantly shifting account will be all but worthless unless it can be corroborated. And Susan could be a vital witness. She wasn't a participant in the alleged meeting, but she signed the fraudulent loan agreement and disbursed the proceeds. Starr's office wants to know whether she discussed the loan or the meeting with Clinton. (She has acknowledged being in frequent contact with him—not at the time of the loan, necessarily, but several months afterward.) Corroborated testimony from Susan that Clinton knew nothing about the meeting or the loan and that Clinton himself testified truthfully would go a long way toward relegating this chapter of the Whitewater business to a footnote to history. Corroborated testimony to the contrary could implicate Clinton in financial fraud and perjury.

Thus, the President's and Starr's fates are to a large degree in Susan's hands. Starr cannot fulfill his mandate to get to the bottom of Whitewater without her testimony, let alone make any decisions about whether to pursue charges against the Clintons. She may yet change her mind and agree to talk to the Office of the Independent Counsel. As of now, the story she tells of her years with Jim McDougal and their friendship with the Clintons—filled with melodramatic turns—is bizarrely at odds with the story her ex-husband tells.



MARK ULRIKSEN

Susan McDougal: The fates of both Bill Clinton and Kenneth Starr rest largely in her hands.

I HAVE been in contact, on and off, with Susan and Jim McDougal for three years. Beginning in July of 1996, when I last wrote about Whitewater, my occasional calls to Jim McDougal went unreturned. Then his answering machine was disconnected. I subsequently learned that he was coöperating with the independent counsel and had moved into an apartment in Little Rock, a "safe house" provided by the government.

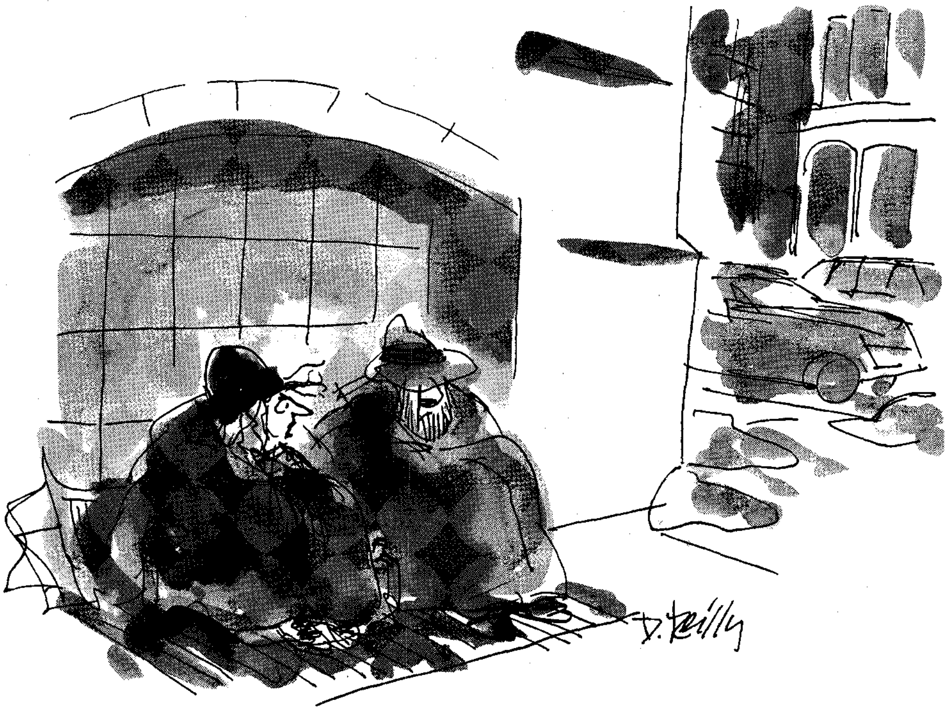
In mid-January, just before travelling to California to see Susan, I dialled Jim's number, not expecting any answer. This time, he picked up the phone. He sounded pleased to hear from me, and said that his coöperation agreement didn't preclude visitors, so I arranged to meet him in the mobile home he occupies in Arkadelphia.

As we drove to Jim's favorite restaurant, the Western Sizzlin just off Interstate 30, he praised Starr and his staff as ladies and gentlemen who had treated him with impeccable fairness and courtesy. He pointed out that they often made the trip to Arkadelphia to spare him the travel, and brought coffee and bagels. He said he particularly appreciated the attention of Amy St. Eve, an attractive young prosecutor then in Starr's office, whom he credits with persuading him to coöperate.

At the restaurant, McDougal told me that Starr and his colleagues were "desperate" for Susan's testimony, because, he claimed, she could corroborate much of what he'd told the independent counsel. He acknowledged that his own testimony will be susceptible to attack on cross-examination.

Jim didn't want to discuss in any detail what he'd told the independent counsel, but, significantly, he said he is now backing Hale's version of events and so is contradicting both the videotaped testimony of the President and his own sworn statements. Jim insists that he didn't lie on the witness stand, arguing that he gave "misleading" testimony, because the prosecutors "didn't ask the right questions"—a claim that is flatly contradicted by the trial record. In any event, he now says that he remembers the disputed meeting quite clearly and wonders why Clinton turned up there, since neither he nor Hale had invited him.

At one point in the conversation, Mc-



"So when's all this new street furniture supposed to arrive?"

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Dougal paused, with a look that I've seen before and that I've come to suspect means he is pondering whether he should plunge into a dangerous area. This is what he came up with:

In 1982, Susan took her mother on a trip to Europe. The day they were due to return, Jim said, he was working at his office at Madison Bank & Trust, in Kingston, and called his home to see if Susan had arrived safely. The phone didn't ring. Instead, Jim claimed, he found himself listening to a phone conversation already in progress between Susan and Bill Clinton. Jim looked uncomfortable and seemed to search for words. "How should I say this? They were intimate," he said. "There was no doubt in my mind."

McDougal told me he drove home and asked his wife whether she was having an affair with Bill Clinton. Susan, he said, acknowledged that she was. McDougal continued, "This may be difficult to understand, but I didn't really care. Our relationship had evolved. . . . We'd become more business partners, companions." McDougal said he never broached the subject to Susan again.

Whatever one makes of Jim McDougal's account, Susan's relationship to the Clintons, especially to Bill, is a thread that runs through the Whitewater saga, and is a subject of great interest to investigators. Ordinarily, any personal relationship between Susan and Bill would be irrelevant, and if McDougal's account is accurate his confrontation with Susan occurred three and a half years before the Hale loan took place. But it's clear that prosecutors believe a close relationship might suggest a motive for Clinton to have discussed the loan with Hale. It might also help to explain Susan's silence.

IN my prison interview with Susan, I asked whether she had had an affair with the President.

"No," Susan said immediately. She had taken her mother on the European vacation, but when I told her the rest of the story she seemed incredulous. "He's lying!" she said, referring to Jim. "He didn't say that to you! Somebody else told you that!"

I said that Jim had told me.

"That is not true," she insisted. "I wouldn't have believed he said it if he hadn't said it directly to you, because the O.I.C."—the Office of the Independent Counsel—"will say anything. They'll make up anything."

I said that the O.I.C. had told me nothing about it.

At this point Susan asked me to turn off my tape recorder, and I did so, but I continued to take notes. There was no affair, she said, but "Jim wanted me to have an affair with Clinton." She and her husband "were not having sex. People think I left Jim. The truth is, he said he would not have sex with me ever again. That's why we didn't have children, couldn't be a normal family. But he did want me to have sex with other people."

When I asked McDougal about this later, he scoffed. "It was hardly necessary to prostitute my wife when I was already getting everything I wanted from Clinton," he said. I also asked him whether it was plausible that he had been connected to an ongoing telephone conversation, and he responded, "It was just a country phone line. I don't know what happened, but I dialled the number and it didn't ring and I was in the middle of their conversation." McDougal now seemed concerned that this story might somehow work against Susan's interests, and said that he is still doing what he can to help his former wife. "I haven't told this story to the independent counsel," he added.

When I spoke to Susan's eldest brother, Jim Henley, he seemed apoplectic at McDougal's allegation, saying it would be devastating for his family and for his sister's reputation. McDougal is "trying to drag my sister down with him," he said, characterizing the story as "feeble mutterings from someone desperate to come up with something new. I can't believe anybody would believe Jim McDougal."

David Kendall, a lawyer representing President Clinton, declined comment about this allegation, as did a spokeswoman for Kenneth Starr.

Susan was emphatic that she had never had an affair with Clinton. "I'm a small-town girl, a Southern Baptist," she said. "I wouldn't do it."

SUSAN HENLEY was born in Germany in 1955, the middle child of seven in what remains an extraordinarily close family. Her four brothers—James, Jr., Bill (who visits her frequently in jail), David, and John—all worked for Madison Guaranty Savings & Loan subsidiaries at some point during Jim and Susan's heyday in Arkansas, in the early eighties. Susan has long been viewed by her family as the strongest one—the child expected to look after, inspire, and, if necessary, support the rest.

Susan's father, James, was a career military man. Her mother, Lorette, is Belgian by birth. She was studying to be a pharmacist when the Nazis took control of the universities in 1940, and she subsequently worked for the Resistance. She met Susan's father, then an Army M.P., after the Liberation.

Coming to Arkansas with her husband was a shock to Lorette. James eventually ran a succession of gas stations, but at times, with so many children to support, the Henleys barely made ends meet, and Susan vividly remembers the experience of poverty. Military discipline reigned at home. Smoking, drinking, and dancing were forbidden, and Susan and her sisters were held to a strict curfew.

Susan won a scholarship to Ouachita Baptist University, in Arkadelphia, about forty miles from the family's home, in Camden. During the summer before her senior year, she got a job as secretary and researcher in the political-science department, headed by a former Arkansas lieutenant governor named Bob Riley. Jim McDougal, a close friend and adviser to Riley, had served as Riley's chief of staff during a brief period when Riley was acting governor. Riley helped get McDougal a teaching post at Ouachita, even though McDougal had never graduated from college.

Nevertheless, he was a popular and dynamic teacher. He dressed impeccably, could quote long passages from James Madison and Franklin Roosevelt, had managed Senator J. William Fulbright's Little Rock office, and seemed to know every politician and aspiring politician in Arkansas. He drove a yellow Mercedes convertible and had already made considerable money, both for himself and for Fulbright, from investing in real estate—a pursuit he'd been introduced to by his sponsor in Alcoholics Anonymous. He moved to Arkadelphia in 1975, boasting that he was descended from royal blood: a Scottish lord and a Norwegian princess, whose offspring once owned a third of all the land in Scotland. It was this ancestry, he claimed, that explained his aptitude for real estate.

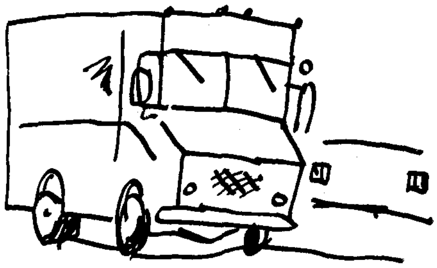
Susan was introduced to McDougal by another faculty member. Fifteen years younger than he, she was smitten by his genteel manners, worldly charm, and erudite stories. They began dating regularly.

One afternoon in the spring of 1976, Jim asked Susan to gather a crowd in a cafeteria at nearby Henderson State University for a Democratic candidate for attorney general, a twenty-nine-year-old politician named Bill Clinton. Jim gave Clinton a check for fifteen hundred dollars, and Clinton later sent him a thank-you note, in which he wrote, "I really liked that pretty girl."

Susan's parents and brothers disapproved of McDougal, because of his age and the fact that he was divorced; they were dismayed when she told them she intended to marry him.

The McDougals settled near Little Rock, and Jim enlisted Susan, then twenty-one, in his burgeoning real-estate deals, which already included three developments around Little Rock. McDougal's practice was to buy a large tract of land, clean it up, carve it into lots, and sell the lots at a profit. He and Susan would cruise back roads in the convertible looking for land deals, and Susan soon displayed a flair for marketing and designing folksy brochures that extolled the virtues of what was invariably portrayed as country living, however suburban the tracts actually were. She appeared in television ads for several of the developments. In one, she wore tight bluejeans while leading a horse; in another, she wore a revealing halter top while driving a Mustang convertible. The ads turned Susan into a minor celebrity in Little Rock. Susan also tended to many of the bookkeeping details, though her lawyers would maintain at her trial that she simply did what Jim told her.

Jim and Susan often dined at the Black-Eyed Pea restaurant, where they sometimes met Bill and Hillary Clinton. On one of those occasions, during the late spring of 1978, when Clinton was running for governor, Jim invited Bill and Hillary to invest with him and Susan in a parcel of land in the hilly terrain of Marion County, in northern Arkansas. Bill had earlier made a modest profit in another McDougal land venture, and the Clintons agreed. Susan came up with the name White Water, and designed a color brochure proclaiming, "One weekend here and you'll never want to live anywhere else."

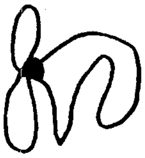


After Clinton was elected governor, later that year, Jim signed on with the new administration as an economic adviser and liaison to, among other things, banking interests and the highway department. Jim didn't bother to consult Susan before taking the job. One day, he simply got up from an antique partners desk they shared and said, "I'm joining the Governor's staff. I'll see you later."

That move left Susan, at twenty-three, to deal with the demands of their growing real-estate business. Jim was increasingly away from home, often travelling with Clinton. When Susan complained, she says, Jim got angry, and told her that she was "clinging." Susan herself began spending time around the Governor's office—a freewheeling spot where the atmosphere is said to have at times resembled that of an ongoing fraternity party. Susan loved to chat and flirt with the Governor's aides. Jim, for his part, enjoyed being at the center of Arkansas politics again, but he was piqued by criticism from Hillary Clinton, who told him, "It's time for you to do something for a change. There's too much fun and games around here." Relying on his contacts within the state's banking circles, he impulsively decided to quit the Governor's office and buy a bank in tiny Kingston, in Madison County. (He had once admired the bank's architecture while driving through the town.) As a populist, he'd long resented Arkansas bankers, whose overly stringent lending standards, he felt, had held back the state's development.

The McDougals sold their house in Little Rock, and put the money toward purchase of the new bank, which Jim named Madison Bank & Trust. The day Susan showed up in Kingston, a town of two hundred people, a cow-dung-tossing competition was going on in the town square. Customers stared at Susan when she showed up at the bank in a short dress and high heels. The bank had a single phone line, and the phone didn't even have a hold button.

Jim was undaunted. He began restoring the bank to what he deemed to have been its original splendor, which meant, among other projects, rebrassing the teller cages and regilding the old barrel safe. McDougal made low-interest loans available to other people willing to restore historic buildings, aiming to turn the town into a tourist attraction. He threw a festival in 1981 to commemorate the bank's seventieth anniversary. It was held on the square, with rides in a hot-air balloon, bluegrass music, and a "millionaire for a day" contest. Senator Fulbright attended. None of this, however, paid off in profits at the bank. Jim's preoccupation with Madison left Susan to cope with the real-estate deals, including Whitewater, where lots were not selling, and which required increasing infusions of cash to stay afloat. Then, in 1982, McDougal called Susan one evening from a pay phone in Fayetteville and said, "Turn on the TV!" There on the screen was her husband, announcing that he was running for Congress. It was the first Susan had heard of it.



That year, Clinton was trying to regain the governorship after being defeated in 1980, and the two couples, Bill and Hillary and Jim and Susan, were soon on the campaign trail together.

McDougal, despite his political experience, was not a natural campaigner; his speeches seemed stiff and old-fashioned. Hillary, too, often seemed uncomfortable campaigning in the dusty small towns of Arkansas. But Bill Clinton and Susan McDougal—the Governor's pet name for her was Child Bride—seemed to love it: the glad-handing, the hugging, the back-slapping, the contest to remember names of people from all over the state. They campaigned tirelessly and exuberantly.

Clinton was reëlected governor, but McDougal got slaughtered by his Republican opponent. He returned to banking. Despite mounting losses and problems at Madison Bank in Kingston, he borrowed money to buy Woodruff County Savings & Loan, which he rechristened Madison Guaranty Savings & Loan. Thanks to the recent deregulation of S. & L.s, he had more leeway to use Madison Guaranty to finance his real-estate ventures. He rapidly expanded its deposit base, and he opened a Little Rock office, decorated by Susan in an aqua-and-purple color scheme.

About this time, Susan became friendly with a young campaign aide named Pat Harris, who worked for one of their subsidiaries. Harris, whom I interviewed recently in California, says he eventually fell in love with Susan, and he has been a mainstay for her ever since. He has all but sacrificed his own career for her, and is now living in a sparsely furnished home in Redondo Beach and helping support her in her defense against the Mehta charges. When he met Susan, he was a youthful aspiring politician who hoped to use his contacts and experience to run for office. Of the McDougals' marriage, Harris said, "It obviously wasn't terrific. Susan was living in Augusta"—Madison Guaranty's nominal headquarters—"and Jim was in Little Rock. At the office, he'd scream at her, go into tirades" if she questioned any of his lending activities. One night in mid-1984, Harris said, "I was working at the bank when Susan came in." Susan confided to him her concerns about Madison, and she and Harris were soon consulting each other regularly about business matters. Finally, in March of 1985, Susan told Harris that hers was a marriage in name only and that she was going to leave Jim.

Not long afterward, Susan arrived home one evening to discover that her husband had packed up her belongings. "These are your things," he said. "I'll help you pack them into the car. Why don't you take a trip?"

Susan says she wanted to get out of town, in part to avoid rumors that the marriage was troubled. She was now romantically involved with Harris, and she was particularly concerned that her parents not know—especially her mother, who didn't believe in divorce. So, in May of 1985, she signed up for some classes in Dallas and rented an apartment there.

For three months, Harris boarded a flight for Dallas every weekday evening in order to be with Susan, and returned early the next day. "We were in love," he said. "I missed one day, because of a thunderstorm." But when the classes ended and Susan returned from Dallas, she told Harris she did not want to move in with him.

By this time, Susan and Jim were facing financial ruin. One day that summer, when Susan was visiting Jim, he had begun to tremble, and ran out onto the driveway and collapsed from a stroke. He was taken to the hospital and treated, and was separately diagnosed as manic-depressive. A few days after the stroke, they were ousted from their posts at Madison Guaranty. The Federal Home Loan Bank Board, which had begun cracking down on S. & L. abuses, concluded that they had "blatantly disregarded numerous regulations." Harris, too, lost his job there, along with Susan's brothers and other McDougal appointees.

Susan began trying, on her own, to develop Lorrance Heights—a mobile-home subdivision south of Little Rock—to establish herself as a credible developer now that she was separated from Jim. She had earlier applied for the three-hundred-thousand-dollar loan from David Hale, submitting an application that made no mention of Lorrance Heights. The application said the proceeds would be used to finance a small advertising company, to be run by Susan, called Master Marketing. But, as the jury discovered last summer, Master Marketing did not exist. The company was fashioned to meet the lending requirements of Hale's federally backed small-business-loan operation. Hale and, now, McDougal say that among the matters discussed at the disputed meeting with Bill Clinton was Susan's loan. In any case, Hale agreed to the loan, and Susan used some of the proceeds to buy the Lorrance Heights land, initially in the name of Whitewater, before transferring it to a corporation owned solely by the McDougals. The Clintons, as Whitewater partners, stood to benefit, at least briefly, from the illegal-loan proceeds, which is one reason that Starr's investigators have been so interested in whether Bill Clinton attended the meeting with Hale and knew about the loan.

Susan enlisted her brother David, and the two spent most of their time during late 1986 and 1987 working at Lorrance Heights. The independent counsel has obtained phone records from this time, and they show numerous calls between Clinton's office and the site. Susan told me in an earlier interview, before her incarceration, that she was on the phone with Clinton nearly every day, and that he was giving her much needed emotional support at a time when she was separated from her ailing husband and their financial world was collapsing. Investigators are eager to know what Susan and Clinton were talking about, what their relationship was at the time, and whether Clinton had reason to know of the loan and how it was used.

One day in 1987, Harris and Susan said, Bill Clinton called to tell Susan that Hillary wanted to see some of the Whitewater records. Susan says Harris stopped her from personally taking a large box to the Governor's Mansion, telling her, "You're not going over there—not within a mile of that guy."

Harris recalls stopping Susan, but says that he didn't use that language. He told me that he didn't believe Susan and Clinton were having an affair. But Bill Clinton was always flirting with her, he said, adding, "The whole sexual atmosphere in that place was something that I didn't want her around. And, yes, I was jealous of Bill Clinton."

Lots at Lorrance Heights sold well, but buyers sued the development for failure to provide services that had been promised. In April of 1987, Susan defaulted on the three-hundred-thousand-dollar loan from Hale. Later that year, the mortgage holder foreclosed on the Lorrance Heights project.

Soon afterward, Susan and Harris decided that they had no choice but to abandon Arkansas, Susan's debts, and Harris's political aspirations. They would move to California. Susan was still married to Jim—in part because she "did not want her divorce in the Arkansas papers," Harris says.

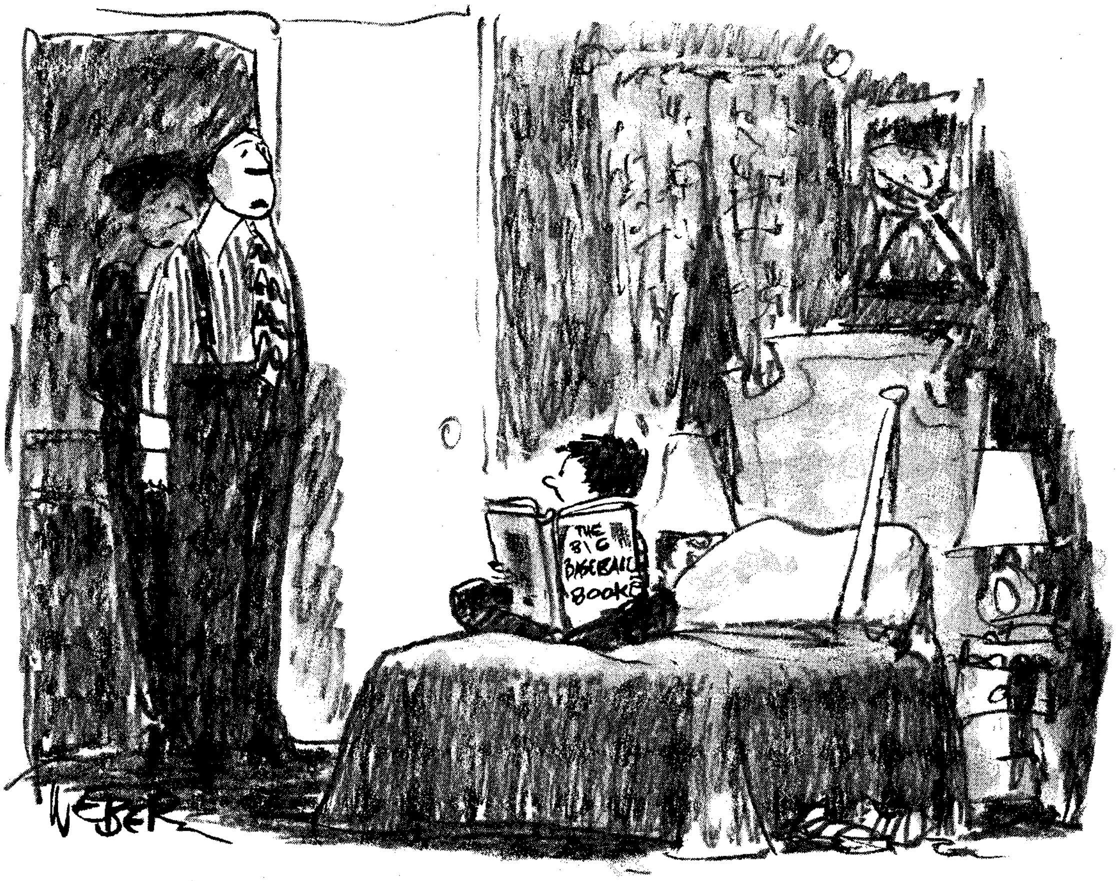
In April of 1988, Susan, now thirty-two, and Harris arrived in Los Angeles with no money, no job prospects, and no friends. They went straight to an employment agency. Susan was hired at Occidental Petroleum's Los Angeles headquarters and was soon working as an executive secretary for Michael Hammer, Armand Hammer's grandson and heir apparent at the company. Harris, because of his real-estate experience, was sent for a job interview at what was described as a small real-estate operation. When he arrived at the address, he found that it was the home of Zubin and Nancy Mehta—a house once owned by Steve McQueen. Harris had never heard of Zubin Mehta, but he recognized Mrs. Mehta as Nancy Kovack, an actress who had played Darrin's old girlfriend on "Bewitched" and had had a starring role in "Jason and the Argonauts," a movie that he had recently seen on TV. Harris says that Nancy seemed delighted that he recognized her and not her famous husband, and also seemed pleased that her dog, Taras, the borzoi, came to Harris. Harris got the job.

The Mehtas owned five houses that were rented out as luxury properties and generated considerable income. Harris attended to routine maintenance; an accountant handled financial matters. Zubin Mehta was almost always on concert tours. At the Mehta residence, pride of place went to Taras—or Tari, as Nancy called him. The dog's food of choice was steak, prepared by the houseman to the dog's liking. Harris says that on a couple of occasions, when Nancy was to be away, she had a borzoi specialist from New York and his companion fly first-class to Los Angeles to dog-sit. Despite this pampering, Taras was prone to violent outbursts. Harris had scars, plainly visible, where, he said, Taras had bitten him. (He never reported the incident, he said, for fear of losing his job.) Nonetheless, Nancy insisted that Taras be given the run of the estate, and, according to Harris, she told the dog's victims that they had "invaded Taras's space."

Harris had sometimes spoken of his girlfriend, and one evening in the fall of 1988 Nancy Mehta joined them at a movie. Harris told me that he had introduced Susan and Nancy and then gone to get popcorn. When he returned, minutes later, he said, the two already seemed like close friends. "Susan is charming," Harris said, "but this was a record."

That Saturday, Nancy took Susan shopping. Saying that Susan's Arkansas country-girl look was all wrong, she bought Susan about two thousand dollars' worth of new suits and dresses on their first outing, according to Harris. Nancy later insisted that Susan go to her hairdresser, and chose a new hair color for her.

After about a year, Harris decided to



"Somehow, Daniel, you're not as cute as you used to be, and you're beginning to lose our attention."

apply to law school and made plans to give notice. Nancy asked him if Susan might be willing to work for her. Susan took over Harris's job at the Mehtas', at a considerably higher salary than Harris had been paid. Harris took a job as a cabdriver while waiting to be admitted to law school.

Susan and Nancy spent nearly every evening together at dinners, movies, plays. Susan, who had won a prize for her redecoration of Madison Guaranty's Little Rock offices, helped Nancy redecorate the luxury rental properties—an enterprise that required long shopping expeditions and lunches.

In the summer of 1990, Harris enrolled at the University of Michigan law school, hoping Susan would join him in Ann Arbor. He testified at Susan's sentencing hearing that when Susan broached the possibility to Nancy, Nancy seemed devastated, threatening to "kill herself if Susan left." Harris told me, "That was too much for Susan. She couldn't walk out on Nancy."

Not long afterward, Nancy dismissed her accountant, and Susan took over the books as well as the property management, telling Harris that her salary would be doubled, to about eighty thousand a year. Susan and the Mehtas were together in Italy in June of 1991. On Harris's next spring break, Nancy paid to have him and Susan join her in Baja California for a whale-watching expedition. At times, Nancy allowed Susan to live in one of the rental houses or in the Mehtas' own home. Harris was concerned that Susan was beginning to talk like Nancy, calling people "darling," for example. Harris told me that he had warned Susan, "This will end badly."

For the next summer—in 1992—Harris secured a clerkship with a highly regarded Dallas law firm. Susan agreed to stay with him for half the summer. In July, when Susan returned to Los Angeles, Nancy had her houseman pick her up at the airport and drive her to one of the rental houses. The next day, at the Mehta house, Nancy, her lawyer, Grant Gifford, and an accountant confronted Susan with what they claimed were fraudulent credit-card charges and forged checks.

Nancy Mehta subsequently told police investigators that her suspicions had been aroused one day while Susan was in Dallas. She had received a call from an officer at BankAmerica, who said that an establishment in Dallas had called for authorization, because the credit card that Nancy had co-signed had reached its charge limit. Would she consent to an increase in the line of credit? Nancy was baffled, she later told investigators, because she had instructed Susan to cancel her BankAmerica card. The card in question turned out to be a separate card. The application for it had been signed by Susan McDougal and Nancy Mehta. Investigators subsequently testified that Nancy's signature was forged.

This prompted a full-scale analysis of the records that had been under Susan's control. Some of Nancy's signatures on checks appeared to have been forged. Numerous credit-card charges, Nancy claimed, hadn't been authorized by her, and bore Susan's signature. Statements for the allegedly forged BankAmerica card were sent to a postal box rented by Susan. There were many charges for a storage locker in the San Fernando Valley; according to testimony, the locker was rented in the names of Susan McDougal and her brother David Henley. Investigators suspect that merchandise may have been delivered there to avoid detection by the Mehtas. On the basis of Nancy Mehta's representations, investigators concluded that the unauthorized charges totalled just over a hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

When I asked Susan about the credit-card charges, she said that the signature on the BankAmerica card application was Nancy's and that she had been present when Nancy signed it. The statements were sent to a different address, she said, because Nancy didn't want Zubin to see any of the records. Many of the charges, Susan explained, were payments for her bookkeeping work, and others were gifts from Nancy. Susan conceded in our recent interview that none of this was reported as income on her tax returns, but said she assumed that Jim McDougal, who prepared her returns even after their divorce, in 1990, had taken care of it.

Nancy's friends, as well as investigators who have interviewed her, insist that Susan and Harris's version of events is a transparent attempt to use Nancy's generosity to transform her from victim to culprit. They say that Nancy was fond of Susan, and viewed her almost as a daughter, but that it was Susan who pursued the relation-

"Well, so much for happy hour."

ship, asking, for example, to be included on shopping trips and to accompany the Mehtas to Italy. The notion that Nancy threatened to commit suicide, they say, is ludicrous. The investigators say that Nancy's signature on the card application is a crude forgery that was readily recognized as such by Nancy, and add that it is not credible that Nancy would want to hide one set of charge records but not others. Jim McDougal acknowledges that he prepared Susan's tax returns, but says Susan never mentioned anything about any income other than what was reported on her W-2 forms.

When I reached Nancy Mehta by phone, she said she was turning down all requests for interviews. She added that she would not talk to me in particular, because I had already been "taken in" by Susan. She did say this about Susan: "She was devastatingly deceitful. Within five days of walking into my office, she had a fraudulent BankAmerica card. Where did she learn that? She said, 'I'm just a poor girl off the truck, and I need a job.' We were all taken in, we tried to protect her. I could write a book on Susan McDougal and it would be a blockbuster, but I'm not going to."

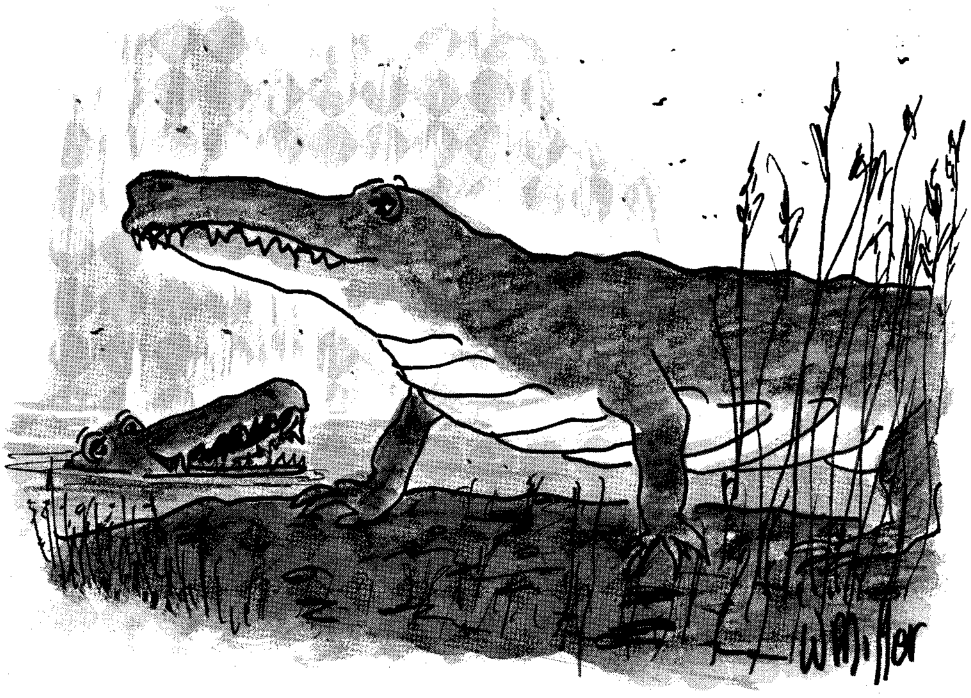
In March of 1992, a few months before Nancy and Susan parted company, the original Whitewater story, by Jeff Gerth, appeared in the New York *Times*. Susan found out about it from her brother Jim Henley, who was actively supporting Clinton in Texas. Henley was furious at McDougal for talking to the press. Susan, who hadn't read the article, defended McDougal, although she, too, was a Clinton supporter and was thrilled that someone she knew might actually become President. It was McDougal's choice to talk if he wanted to, she said. But after learning that reporters were pursuing her friend Claudia Riley, Bob Riley's wife, Susan called Jim McDougal's lawyer, Sam Heuer, to find out what was going on. Heuer emphasized how foolish Jim had been, and advised Susan not to talk.

Whitewater soon receded as an issue, and Clinton was elected. Susan had moved to Nashville, where Harris got a job as a public defender. She worked as a secretary at Vanderbilt University. Susan and Harris had no further contact with the Mehtas, and hoped that the dispute between Susan and Nancy would fade away. But in December, 1993, a judge in Santa Monica handed down ten counts against her, including charges of forgery and grand theft. A few weeks later, Whitewater erupted in the national press, with the discovery that Whitewater files had been removed from the office of Vincent W. Foster, Jr., the deputy White House counsel, after his body was found in Fort Marcy Park, outside Washington. In January, as the furor mounted, Clinton called for the appointment of an independent counsel. Susan had been working at Vanderbilt for just over two months when a CNN reporter reached her boss and revealed that she had been Jim McDougal's wife and one of the Whitewater partners. Harris later testified, "They basically asked her if she would leave. . . . She said she didn't want to cause any problems, so she left." Any semblance of a normal life for Susan vanished as the two investigations, Mehta and Whitewater, closed in around her.

Susan cites a litany of alleged grievances to explain her intense mistrust of the independent counsel and his investigators: they have impugned her character and integrity; they have harassed and threatened her family and friends; they have lied to her; she is a mere pawn in their politically motivated crusade to "get" the Clintons. Susan says her attitude hardened early in the investigation, when she was asked to go to Starr's offices to provide what she thought would be a routine handwriting sample. Since Susan had signed the loan agreement and promissory notes, an element of the government's case was likely to be an expert identification of her signature. As Susan remembers the episode, she was placed in a small room with two F.B.I. agents. She says she was bullied by the agents, who unfairly accused her of attempting to disguise her handwriting.

This incident, like virtually all of those Susan cites, remains a matter of dispute. Ray Jahn, Kenneth Starr's associate, who directed the prosecutions in Little Rock, has denied that Susan was improperly pressured. Clearly, the Office of the Independent Counsel has used a full array of prosecutorial tactics, as they would with any hostile defendant or witness.

Susan and her lawyers headed into her Whitewater trial last summer confident that she would be acquitted. The judge had thrown out several counts against her. Susan never took the stand in her own defense. Jim McDougal had argued that none of the defendants should take the stand, that the government had submitted such a weak case that all of the defendants should simply show the President's videotaped



"Nice abs."

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testimony contradicting Hale, and rest. Then, on May 6th, McDougal suddenly announced that he would take the stand the next morning. Susan told me that she told Jim's lawyer that morning, "Whatever you do, please don't put Jim on the stand." Susan had met Jim for breakfast and was alarmed by his behavior. "He was ranting and raving about what he was going to do to the O.I.C.," she recalled. "He was going to tear them apart. I could tell that he'd taken way too many Prozac."

McDougal did take the stand, and his testimony began fairly well. After "twenty years of personal close intimate knowledge of Susan," he told the jury, "my opinion is Susan McDougal never did anything illegal, immoral, or unethical in her life that I know about." But on cross-examination his testimony was devastating for Susan. He told the jury that Master Marketing, the fictitious recipient of the three-hundred-thousand-dollar loan, was "Susan's deal"—was "her undertaking." In one of his more sweeping comments, he testified, "I think since we worked together—you know, were together most of the time—that there would not have been anything we were undertaking that I wouldn't have freely discussed with her." Shortly after this testimony, Susan rushed, sobbing, into a small room off the courtroom. Recalling the episode at our interview, Susan said, "It was horrible."

The issue of whether Susan had an affair with Bill Clinton didn't arise, but it was hinted at in a colloquy with the judge. Jahn was trying to protect Hale, his star witness, by preventing any questions on cross-examination about sexual affairs that Hale may have had. When defense lawyers objected to this restriction, Jahn argued that allowing such questions would permit him to ask about affairs *their* clients might have had. "The United States has a good-faith basis on which to ask certain individuals whether or not they have had sexual relationships with some of these defendants," he said. Later in the colloquy, he said that it might even extend to questioning the President on the subject: "The problem is if we get down to that point and we have a witness such as William Jefferson Clinton testifying, is the court setting a precedent that we can go into questions concerning President Clinton's activity? And I don't think we should. I don't think we can." The issue was settled when everyone agreed that during the trial no one would be asked about sex.

On May 28th, Susan was stunned by the jury's verdict: guilty on all four felony counts—mail fraud and aiding and abetting the misapplication of bank funds, the making of false entries, and the making of false statements. Jim was convicted on eighteen counts. On July 17th, the Office of the Independent Counsel renewed its efforts to secure Susan's coöperation by sending a letter to her lawyers. Eager for Susan to see the letter, they sent a copy to her, too. The letter said, "It is our belief that your client has personal knowledge of certain facts that are relevant to our investigation." It indicated that the office was not interested in prosecuting any members of her family (the office had earlier investigated her brothers, thereby angering all the Henleys), and said her problems in California "are not of interest to us and will not be the subject of our questions."

After Susan had read the letter, Jim met with her at his mobile home and told her that he was going to talk to the independent counsel about a deal. Susan already knew that Jim, without consulting his lawyer, had made a proffer. She told me that it included handing over the results of lie-detector tests he'd insisted on taking prior to his Whitewater trial. Among the questions McDougal answered, in an effort to discredit Hale, were whether Clinton knew about the Hale loan and whether Clinton met with McDougal and Hale to discuss it. McDougal says he failed the test the first time he took it. In an effort to pass at least once, he took the test four more times, using two different examiners. "I flunked every time," McDougal told me when I asked about this after my interview with Susan. "I was trying to get by the test. I found they're hard to get around."

It seems characteristic that Jim's most valuable bargaining chip is the fact that he failed a lie-detector test—which, in any event, wouldn't be admissible in court. (And it's unclear what effect, if any, Jim's medication had on the results.) But, Susan told me, Jim was "wildly excited" about giving Starr the test results, believing they confirmed his claim that he had been lying to protect himself and Clinton, and that he was now telling the truth.

Susan recalled that after Jim told her he was cutting a deal in order to postpone

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SHOWCASE BY ELFIE SEMOTAN

FASSBINDER'S FIVE

He was a romantic idealist obsessed with exposing rot and corruption. Nothing more fully confirmed his perpetual sense of loss—this only child of divorced parents, born in Germany a mere three weeks after the Third Reich surrendered to the Allies—than innocence exploited. He made forty-four films, all of which were, on some level, about innocence made corrupt: by the war, by petty bureaucrats, by bigotry, by loneliness. The grand amalgamation of his three names, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, became, in time, as famous as the excesses—drugs, drink, work—that led to his death, at thirty-seven, alone in his Munich flat.

For many years, fans on this side of the ocean caught Fassbinder's films wherever they could. Many of the pictures weren't on videotape; the early ones were hard to come by anywhere. The current retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art (through March 20th) not only includes all his extant movies but also makes available his complete collaborations with a number of women. More often than not, it was one of the five women at the right—Rosel Zech, Barbara Sukowa, Hanna Schygulla, Irm Hermann, and Margit Carstensen—who portrayed Fassbinder's inner self: the lover of black men, of isolation, of the dramatic flourish. And such was his insight into these actors that in subsequent films, made with other directors, their power is diminished.

"The Marriage of Maria Braun," which closed the New York Film Festival in 1979, was Fassbinder's masterwork, not least because it starred Schygulla, the most versatile of his muses, but also because in the film she stood for something Americans had never before seen so fully exposed: the emotional consequences of Germany's 1945 defeat and of its efforts to rebuild using mortar scratched from the rubble. When it came to his work, Fassbinder was ruthless and not at all romantic. What he wanted us to see, and what his women on the screen enacted, was the dignity inherent in having any ideals at all.

—Hilton Als

Photographed at MOMA, *January 24, 1997.*

"Those bullet holes are something new, aren't they?"

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and reduce his time in prison, she said to him, "Well, let me tell you what you can do for me. You do whatever you're going to do. And you tell them that part of your deal is that they're going to let me have probation. . . . Then I'll help you all I can. I'll do anything I can for you, but you just have to tell them that part of your deal is that they don't touch me."

Several days later, according to Susan, she was staying with her old friend Claudia Riley, who lives up the hill from the mobile home, and walked down to talk with Jim again. While she was there, he received a phone call. He listened, then held the phone and turned to Susan, excited. "I got it," he said. "I got the six months out." He returned to the phone, and Susan heard him say, "How about the apartment in Little Rock? And the expenses? All right, I got that. And at my sentencing hearing you'll stand up and say I'm a God-fearing man? That's part of it, right? You're gonna say that. And I get the institution I want to go to. They tell me the best federal institution is in Fort Worth." He hung up the phone and turned back to Susan.

"Jim," Susan said, "I didn't hear you mention anything about me."

He was unconcerned. "I got everything I asked for," he replied. "I'm going to handle that."

"I'm relying on that," Susan replied.

A few days later, Susan says Starr himself visited Jim at the mobile home; she and Claudia Riley watched his arrival from Riley's house. "Claudia and I were seething and planning all sorts of retribution," Susan recalled. Starr came down to Jim's trailer "in a pair of Sansabelt slacks and a shirt from K mart. I mean, you couldn't have dressed any more like a country bumpkin than if someone from Wardrobe had done it. It was embarrassing." Starr was accompanied by Amy St. Eve, the young associate deputy counsel who had charmed McDougal. Jim had "insisted that Amy loved him," Susan said. Even before his deal, Susan said, she told him, "Oh, my God, how, how in the world could you talk with her?" He had replied, "I just don't understand women at all—these petty jealousies." Susan then told him, "She's using you."

Once Jim began coöperating, he had several more conversations with Susan. "You have to make a deal," he told her. "You are going to jail if you don't. They are going to put you away. Do you understand me?" He continued, according to Susan, "This is the deal I got for you: total probation on everything, and"—he paused for emphasis—"you name who you want to talk to."

"They're all scum," Susan told me she had replied. "They'll do anything." Whereupon Jim warned, "You'd better do something." To me, she said, "Jim was telling me how much fun it was going to be. Just the two of us, going around together with the F.B.I., having fun and testifying in different places. It was just going to be a lark. It would be a vacation for the two of us after what we'd been through. We'd be together."

Susan and Claudia then drove to Jonesboro to meet with Susan's lawyer Bobby McDaniel. McDaniel initiated a conference call with Ray Jahn. Despite her anger, Susan said that Jim had nearly persuaded her to coöperate, but when Jahn and two other lawyers for the independent counsel introduced themselves on the speakerphone, she refused to say hello. "Susan doesn't want to speak to you," McDaniel said, according to Susan. McDaniel is a self-proclaimed "yellow-dog Democrat" and Clinton supporter, and has said that he won't represent any defendant who coöperates with the independent counsel. McDaniel told Jahn on the phone, "We're real confused about what you want. You want to tell us?" When the prosecutor mentioned the mandate to investigate the Clintons, McDaniel said, "I think Susan's been pretty clear that she doesn't know anything on the Clintons."

Susan said that she and Claudia were stunned by what they considered Jahn's pressuring her to get the Clintons. "I won't have any part of it," McDaniel told Susan. Claudia added, "This is so evil." Neither McDaniel nor Susan responded further to Jahn. About the call, the independent counsel issued a statement saying that Susan and McDaniel "persist in misrepresenting the substance of a conversation with my staff."

Susan told me that McDougal said, "You make a deal and save your ass or I never want to speak to you again. You understand me? This Pollyanna bullshit that you didn't do anything or do they know you didn't do anything, I want it over with."

Susan's sentencing hearing was held on August 20th. The previous day, Jim's had been postponed, thanks to his coöperation, and Susan's spirits lifted when the judge sentenced Arkansas's former governor Jim Guy Tucker, who had been convicted on two felony counts, to probation and a period of home detention. Pat Harris appeared as Susan's character witness. Unfortunately for Susan, Jahn's cross-examination of Harris suggested that Susan had begun her affair with Harris while she was still living with McDougal; that she had made no visible attempt to repay the three-hundred-thousand-dollar Hale loan even as she was helping put Harris through law school; that she had embezzled more than a hundred and fifty thousand dollars from the Mehtas and had never declared any of it as income; that she had submitted falsified résumés to obtain jobs at Occidental Petroleum, the University of Michigan, and Vanderbilt; and that she had lied to the probation officer about her employment history. "This is not a case, Your Honor, of a naïve woman who made a mistake ten years ago," Jahn said. "This is a woman who has engaged in a continuing practice of fraud and continuing practice of deception." Susan was sentenced to two years in prison for her Whitewater felonies, and as she left the courtroom she was handed a subpoena to appear before the Whitewater grand jury.

Shaken, Susan went home to Camden. For the first time, she acknowledged to herself that she was going to jail. The night before her grand-jury appearance, she, her parents, and several of her brothers sat down at the kitchen table. They recognized that her only hope of avoiding jail might be to coöperate by answering the independent counsel's questions. Her brother Jim insisted that she not coöperate. Bill wasn't so sure, suggesting that maybe there was some middle ground. Then Susan's mother, Lorette, recalling her days in Nazi-occupied Belgium, commented, "This is the same sort of thing the secret police used to do. Make one person testify against another."

"Mom, what should I do? I never would have believed it," Susan said.

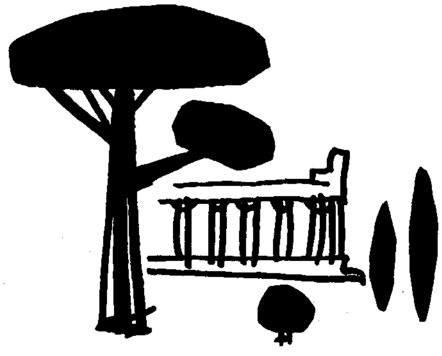
"If I can stand up against that, you can stand up against this," Lorette replied.

The next day, Susan was brought before the grand jury, and refused to answer.

SUSAN'S incarceration on civil-contempt charges was immediately appealed by her lawyers to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. The court issued a detailed finding that Susan's treatment had been "consistent with long-standing federal practice."

Susan insisted to me, as she had repeatedly insisted to others, that she knows of no criminal activity by either Bill or Hillary Clinton. Specifically, she said she knows of no meeting among Clinton, Hale, and her former husband. She told me that the reason she doesn't testify to this is that she's afraid that Starr won't believe her and she'll be indicted for perjury anyway.

In granting permission for my visit to Susan, both the independent counsel and Susan's lawyer may have been hoping this article would prove a catalyst for some resolution of the current stalemate in the case. But there is clearly much left unresolved, including Jim's assertion that he lied about Clinton's knowledge of the loan, his account of the crucial meeting with Hale, and the conflicting stories of Jim and Susan about her purported love affair with Clinton. The possibilities are numerous and, like the assertions, often conflicting. One is that the President lied under oath last summer about the Hale meeting to protect himself from being implicated in financial wrongdoing in Arkansas a decade ago. Another is that he lied but did so to protect Susan and the privacy of a personal relationship. And a third is that he told the truth, and that Jim McDougal has imagined yet another fanciful story.



Starr would almost surely not seek charges against the President based solely on the McDougals' testimony, even if Susan changed her mind and backed Jim up. The prosecutors would need further corroborating evidence—records, details, new witnesses—that Susan might lead them to.

In any case, Susan gives no sign of softening her position. She may not realize that eighteen months isn't the maximum term she faces. The independent counsel could seek criminal-contempt charges, for which she could serve up to five years in prison. Besides, there are still the Mehta charges to be disposed of. That trial could begin as early as the end of March, and if Susan is convicted on all counts, she faces a maximum of nine years in prison. There are also federal-tax issues, currently being investigated by the United States Attorney in Los Angeles. All this doesn't mean that her plight is entirely hopeless. She is appealing her conviction in the Whitewater trial, and she is confident that she will be acquitted in the Mehta case. And, although she has never mentioned it to me, there is the President, who has the power to pardon her.

Pat Harris, who now counsels students on gaining admission to law school, but hopes someday to resume a career as a criminal-defense lawyer, said he wished Susan would put this behind her, so they could get on with their lives. "But," he went on to say, "she looked at me a few days before her sentencing and said, 'I've done things I'm not that proud of—McDougal, working with Nancy Mehta. Trying to satisfy them, I lost what I believe in. I'm not going to do it again. I'm going to stand up for what I believe in. This is a witch-hunt. They're ruining people's lives, and I won't be a part of it.' She's doing this on principle and out of anger. She's stubborn. We've had numerous arguments, and finally I said, 'You win.' She's reconciled to staying in."

Before the prison guard knocked on the door, after exactly sixty minutes, and indicated that my interview with Susan was over, I asked her why she was there.

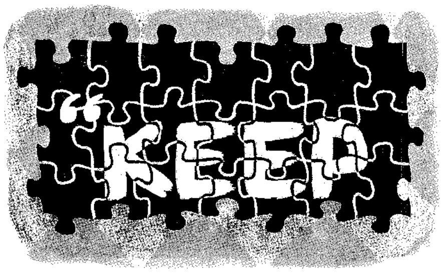
She said, "There has to be some point where you say, 'I won't be part of this slippery thing anymore.' I had to put a stop to it, just for my own self-worth." ♦

FICTION

VISIONS FUGITIVES

The variation matters so much more than the theme.

BY WILLIAM BOYD



straight on, and shortly Saint-Julien (Saint-Julien-sur-Meuse) comes into view. The village (completely ruined) is reached after crossing first the railway and then the small River Andon. Motorcars can climb as far as the church. Turn to the right after passing the church. Numerous German dugouts and gun emplacements can be observed here. Down the lane about three hundred yards from the village there comes into view on the side of the hill a very large American cemetery containing some twenty-eight thousand graves. There is a fine view from here of the lower town and the valley of the Meuse (photo pp. 12 and 13).”

PARIS. Yesterday. Watery November sunshine on glossy cobbles. A rime of sleet melted by breakfast. With sullen aplomb the waiter scooped our plates and coffee cups from the table. My daughter's hands were raw and scraped from shucking four hundred oysters the night before, her knuckles badged with tiny, brilliant, forming scabs. I saw, as she handed me back the letter and the old guidebook, that her fingernails were bitten halfway down to the cuticle. She looked beautiful, I thought, but deathly tired, her beauty draining from her.

“Who's the little girl with Grandma?” she asked. “No, that must be my great-grandma.”

“You look malnourished, Millie,” I said as I took the photograph from her. “It's your great-aunt Sarah.”

“Malnourished? All chefs are malnourished,” she laughed. My daughter had been working in Paris since the summer. “Do you really know where you're going?”

“I'm heading for Metz.”

“Well, drive carefully. What's gotten into you, anyway? I thought you were on holiday. Is this wise?”

“I am on holiday. *And* I'm going to Saint-Julien. I have to be there on the fourth.” I handed her a cutting from a French newspaper. “This was what inspired me.”

She read the cutting: “MAVROCORDATO S'EST SUICIDÉ.”

“I still don't get it, Dad. Who's Mavrocordato?”

“He's a film director. Was a film director.”

“DEAR MRS. CULPEPPER—

Thank you for your letter. I do not know if I can be more precise but I will try. The village was in near complete ruins and was called Saint-Julien, I think. I remember we crossed a railway line and then a small stream. There was a lower town and up on a hill beyond there was a church and other buildings, all fairly knocked about. I remember three fine ancient cypresses all broken down from artillery. The lower town was quiet, a few bodies here and there, but well cleared out. Captain Shaw sent our platoon forward up the road to the church. It was about three in the afternoon, quite mild, with a light rain falling. This was November 4, 1918. . . .”

In the photograph my grandmother is standing holding her daughter's hand in front of the sign. “Saint-Julien” stands out starkly, black on white, in what is a rather fogged, sun-faded print. All around them lie the ruins of the lower town. On the hill behind is the church with its shattered cypresses. My grandmother stands stiffly (I wonder who took the picture?); her daughter (my aunt Sarah) has turned her head slightly in her direction, as if to ask her a question. The date is 1920, some two years after my grandfather died.

2.

I DEDUCED that the noise must have been caused by a spontaneous rally of fifty garbage trucks deciding to have a revving competition on Seventh Avenue—many floors below, true, but the sonic vibrations were palpable up here. I was trying to listen to “Variations on a Theme by Haydn” on my tape recorder and at the same time was going through my notes of the previous night's concert. The effort it was costing reminded me forcefully of the main reason I left New York. I had just turned up the volume when my breakfast arrived. “It's open,” I called, not looking round, hearing the metallic rattle of the room-service trolley and the clink of glass and silverware as it made its shuddery, percussive way over to the window.

“Ah, Brahms,” said the waiter, organizing the table setting (now I did look round). His voice was light, the “r” rolled slightly, in the French way.

He turned—that is, *she* turned. In full waiter's rig: starched bum-freezer jacket, black trousers, laceup shoes, a black bow tie. Blond hair held back in a taut chignon. Late thirties, I calculated, older than me.

“*Aimez-vous Brahms*?” she said with a smile, holding out the slim folder with the check for me to sign.

“I'm writing a book on him,” I said, noticing simultaneously the sudden hollowness in my chest and the fact that her name tag said “Jay.” Odd name for a woman.

“I love Brahms,” she said.

“Me, too,” I said. “More than life.”

3.

“WE were almost up to the church when the shells started exploding on the road. A whole bunch of us took cover in the graveyard, but they had that targeted, too. Lieutenant Povitch

FILIP PAGOWSKI

shouted at us to head back to the lower town. John and I with a dozen others had jumped over a low wall that bounded the cemetery. Ahead of us up the hill to the left we could see a ruined farmhouse and a big stone barn. It made more sense to take cover up there than risk the descent to the lower town. We set off, John was right behind me. . . ."

My grandmother and her daughter Sarah stayed at the Hostellerie des Remparts, in Rochette, "the original kitchen of which," according to their guidebook, "has preserved its ample proportions and innumerable copper utensils." My guidebook makes no mention of this establishment, but I have decided to stay in the town anyway, if only to approximate the spirit of this impromptu pilgrimage. The road from Paris is quiet, and I am finding, to my vague surprise, that I am actually enjoying driving. I will stay somewhere in Rochette and proceed to Saint-Julien tomorrow, taking my time, making sure that as I walk up the hill from the lower town it will be around three o'clock in the afternoon. If a light rain happens to be falling, so much the better.

4.

THAT Haydn did not write the melody that inspired Brahms' celebrated "Variations" is well known, but the designation is firmly established and so— So what? So we might as well stick with it. How to express that more elegantly? How to say that the notion that this fool has found a "missing" variation is a crock, a brimful, steaming, Grade A crock of—

Jay came into the bar and I put down my notes with barely a tremble, scarcely a rustle of paper. She was wearing a short black dress and her hair was still up, but more loosely, the result of some artful manipulation of pins and tortoiseshell combs.

We shook hands. It seemed unduly formal, but she was foreign. She smiled as I *Sieg-heiled* through the gloom at the idle waiter.

"How's the demolishment going?" she said.

"The stiletto has been inserted between the seventh and eighth ribs. We are halfway to the hilt."

"This new variation was meant to go where?"

"Another vodka Martini and—" I said to the waiter and glanced round at Jay. "And another vodka Martini, on the rocks."

"Between two and three. Variation 2-A, I suppose. Absurd."

"Obscene. May I?" She took one of my cigarettes from the pack on the table, broke off the filter tip, and put the shortened filterless cigarette to her lips, a little off center. I reached for my lighter but she was there first. Yet she frowned, not lighting her cigarette, thinking (thinking about Brahms?), the cigarette between her lips, slightly off center, three uneven creases between her fine dark-blond frowning eyebrows. This is how I will always remember her, frowning, trying to imagine what possible kind of variation could have gone between Nos. 2 and 3. This is one of the ways I will remember her.

5.

INT. NIGHT: The man is leaning against the window frame of the hotel room, his forehead against a cool pane. There is a flushing of water on the soundtrack (over) and the man does not look round. Irène Golan's round impassive face, then the camera tracks down her body. Her small breasts, the swell of her stomach, her neat divot of pubic hair, her knees, her feet. Her name. Irène Golan. The man in profile: he closes his eyes. The girl is in the room now, a stronger light coming through the left-ajar bathroom door. She wears a loose white T-shirt (the man's?) and black panties that do not quite conceal the cleft between her buttocks. The man moves away from the window.

"How many times did you sleep with Urbain?" he asks, in a reasonable voice. "You can tell me, I don't particularly mind."

The girl is sitting down at the room's solitary table. Leaning forward slightly. From the configuration of the folds of her T-shirt, the convexities and concavities, it is possible to imagine that, beneath her T-shirt, her breasts are just resting on the tabletop—the underhang of her breasts just grazing the tabletop. She has an unlit cigarette in her mouth, just off center, and freezes in the act of removing a match from a book of matches. She frowns, possibly, you imagine, considering a response to this question. She looks directly at you, and with two fingers takes the unlit cigarette from her mouth and says, "France is really a beautiful country." Cigarette from her mouth, turns and looks directly at you and says, "France is really a beautiful—"

6.

JAY carefully picked a shred of tobacco from the pink point of her tongue.

"Do you want to"—I cleared my throat—"eat, stay here, try—"

"I'd like to go to a movie," she said. "I'd like to see, more than anything, 'Visions Fugitives.' I've read that it's playing somewhere downtown."

"Anything you say, Jay," I said.

She looked curiously at me. "Why do you call me Jay?" she asked. I explained.

She chuckled. "Oh, that. I was only helping Jay out. I forgot to take his name off the jacket."

I felt that slipping and sliding inside me once more.

"Well," I said, "you have me at a disadvantage. You know my name. I thought I knew yours."

"It's Irène," she said.

7.

"ALL the way up to the farm building John was right behind me. He was saying, 'Come on, Bob, let's go, let's go, Bob.' When we reached the farm we could see that it was in full view of the trench lines and gun emplacements in the upper town. Other men who had run up from the churchyard had taken shelter behind the barn, whose walls were three feet thick, an ancient building. 'Over there, Bob,' John said to me. 'That's for us, buddy.' I can hear his voice in my ears as I write this. There was a four-yard gap between the end of the farmhouse and the gable end of the barn. John pushed me in the back and I hightailed it, ran round the corner of the barn and fell over. That's when I heard the explosion. Some tiles were blown off the roof and there was a lot of smoke. There were some hens inside the barn and they set up a mighty squawking. . . ."

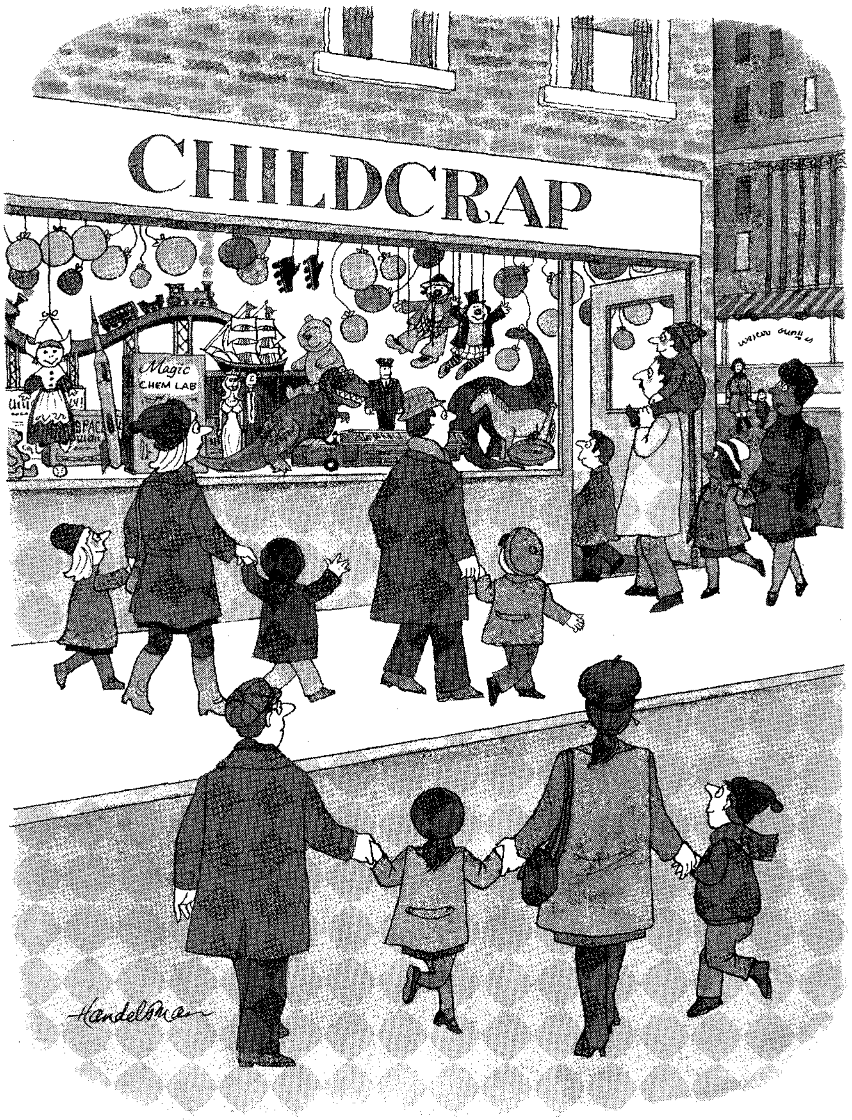
According to my grandmother's note in the margin of the guidebook, she and Sarah ate "some kind of stew" the night they stayed in Rochette, but neither of them had much appetite. I find a room in the Hôtel du Cygne (two stars) in the Place des Halles and, dutifully, eat a cartilaginous *daube de boeuf* in the Brasserie Centrale, five minutes from the hotel, an overlit establishment as doggedly functional as its name.

Walking home at night I reflect that there are few places quite so firmly closed and shuttered to the traveller as a French village after hours. Even the hotel door is locked, and it takes half a dozen rings to summon the amiable patron from his flickering TV.

I stand in my room and look down at the silent street, the shine of the street lamps picking out the dead cars in dewy, nighttime monochrome. I have that sensation—you must know that form of self-consciousness that comes from being strangely alone—when every gesture, every scratch of the head, every throat-clearing acquires a curious, mannered significance. I feel I am performing, I feel I am being filmed. I feel I am playing out an abandoned scene from "Visions Fugitives."

8.

Int. Night: The man sits in a wooden chair, smoking, and watches the girl sleeping. Birdsong, morning light squeezing through half-open shutters. The man is clothed but the girl—most of her beneath a sheet—is plainly naked. Irène Golan's face. The man picks through the girl's clothes, searches her fringed suède handbag, goes through her coat pockets, lights another cigarette, sits down, stands up, walks round the bed. Smoking his cigarette, walks round the bed and crouches down, staring at her. The girl's face. The man's face. Irène Golan turns through ninety degrees. The man stands by the closed window. Stands by the open window. Two gendarmes in the street below. The man recoils, turns and kicks the leg of the bed. "Hey, get up. I'll bring the car round." The girl wakes and sits up in bed, slowly. Her right arm gathering the sheet to her breasts, modestly. She looks as if she had really been sleeping. The man leaves the room and the girl sighs—bored, irritated. With her free hand she pushes strands of hair back from her slumped and sleepy face. She yawns and a corner of the sheet slips and nearly falls free. You wonder if they made love the night before. There is the sound of the key locking the door. The girl does not even turn her head.



9.

"John was lying on the ground in the gap between the farmhouse and the barn. He was rolled onto his side. And he was very pale, white as chalk. But there was no mark on him, not a drop of blood. It must have happened instantly—I was told that the concussive force of certain explosions can do this to you. There appears to be no evident cause of death, apart from this unnatural pallor, as if the blood as well as the breath has been driven from you. We pulled him into the lee of the barn wall and we waited until dark, at which point we made our way back to the lower town. I am sure it happened in a split second and it is inconceivable that he knew a thing. This is exactly as I remember it. I hope this is of some comfort. I should only add that he seemed very peaceful. The next morning our battalion was withdrawn from Saint-Julien and we remained in billets at Verdun until the Armistice.

Yours sincerely,
J. Robert (Bob) Quentin"

10.

" 'Visions Fugitives' (1961). *Un film de Jean-Didier Mavrocordato. Avec la participation d'Alain Hoffman et Julienne Jodelet. . . .*" I remember the poster. I remember the revival house in the Village running a season of "nouvelle vague" films from the sixties. I remember certain scenes in the movie with the recall of the most pedantic cinéaste. But the rest of it remains opaque. It was not that long ago, either. Twelve years, thirteen. I have never made any attempt to see the film again. The memory, with all its gaps, remains sharp, perfect but fragile, and I do not want it disturbed, do not want to shatter its perfect fragility.

11.

"Mavrocordato is Swiss. I am Swiss. I think he used a village in Switzerland for this film which I know. Saint-Julien, it's not far from my home."

"Where's that?"

"Near Lausanne."

The lights dimmed. The film began. On the screen the credits rolled and the abrasive, badly recorded jazz score filled the cinema. Tinny trumpet blare, hiss and tap of wire brush on snare drum. I don't think I had seen a black-and-white film in the cinema for over a decade. I watched, with the curiosity of an anthropologist, as Alain Hoffman and Julienne Jodelet strolled hand in hand along a promenade. Nice? Villefranche? Beaulieu? Juan-les-Pins? I find it hard to recall much more of the opening sequence of the film. In the shifting silver of the semi-dark I felt Irène gently take my hand.

12.

WHO was this Irène Golan? Why did Mavrocordato use that old photograph in his film? Cutting back to it repeatedly? As if it were a vision of absolute torment to taciturn Alain Hoffman, on the run with the exquisite Julienne Jodelet. . . . I lie in my lumpy bed in the Hôtel du Cygne, my head resting on the solid bolster that passes for a pillow, and shuffle the images that slip into my mind. I will not sleep, I know, my mind going now in the perfect shuttered blackness of the room, in that dead calm of hotel noiselessness—which is not noiseless at all. A distant truck changes gear on the *route nationale*, the chuckling of the central heating, the unexplained creaks and thuddings of an old building, the confessional whisper of a toilet flush somewhere below. Sh-h-h.

You know those unhindering hours of the night when your thoughts will wander free, sometimes freighted with despair, but sometimes inspired and almost miraculous—this is one of those nights. And just before I begin to doze I think I have it, my Theory of Everything. It is to do, I decide, with mysterious parabolas, as if a projectile is launched—a stone, a dart, an arrow—sent soaring in the direction of your life. One day it will descend, following its parabolic curve, and hit you, or glance off you, or just miss you. It seems to me in the dazzle-dark of this shuttered hotel room that at times our individual lives are pepper-shot with these mysterious comings to earth. Much of the time they pass unacknowledged—or, if we do acknowledge them, we are only half aware of something happening to us. We stop and turn and take our bearings—we shiver, we ponder, we forget—but do not really understand that we have just intersected with a mysterious parabola. Even if we do, even if we grant that something has happened, something has changed, we do not understand because we cannot trace that parabola back to its starting place. We all know these moments of fleeting significance that touch our lives. The great problem, the abiding problem, is to make some sense of them. . . .

The bizarre death of John Culpepper in Saint-Julien on November 4, 1918. Brahms' "Variations on a Theme by Haydn." Jay turning into Irène. (There's one: She recognized Brahms. What if she had not?) "Visions Fugitives." Jean-Didier Mavrocordato's decision to film his nouvelle-vague masterwork in the small town on the Meuse where my grandfather had died. Irène's misconception that it was filmed near Lausanne provoking our argument. Mavrocordato's suicide (that touched me, glanced off me, that one, but only because I am here in France). I would not be lying in my unyielding bed in the Hôtel du Cygne if John Culpepper had not pushed his friend Bob across the gap between farmhouse and barn first, instead of going himself.

13.

"BRAHMS chose something deeply obscure and, through the special alchemy of his genius, transformed it into one of the best-known tunes in the orchestral repertoire. The melody he chose has nothing to do with Haydn: it forms the second movement of a piece, perhaps by one Ignace Pleyel, which may in turn come from some older, even more forgotten source."

Irène stopped reading. She was sitting at the desk in my hotel room, my typescript in front of her. She was leaning forward slightly, resting on her elbows, and one could imagine, from the convexities and concavities of her dress bodice, that her breasts were just touching the desktop, that the underhang of her breasts was just grazing the desktop.

"Interesting," she said. "I didn't know that."

"Keep going," I said. "It sounds better when you read it. Your accent makes it sound more intelligent."

"I'm thinking of Brazil," she said. "I really think I should go to Brazil next."

I poured some more whiskey into

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her glass and added some ice cubes. My throat felt thick; I could think of nothing, absolutely nothing, to say. She put my typescript down and picked up the leather-framed photograph of my wife and children, my travelling photograph.

“What are your daughters called?”

“Millie. And Lucy. Lucy and Millie.”

“How old are they?

“Six and four. Millie’s the oldest.”

She stood up, her eyes distant, and strolled round from behind the desk, coming over toward me to collect her drink.

“It’s wonderful that, no?” she said. “To take something so obscure and make it so memorable.”

“What? Oh, you mean Brahms, the ‘Variations.’ ”

“But we all do that, I suppose, don’t we? In our own lives, in our own way. Or at least sometimes we try. We should try, when we have that chance, to do what Brahms did.”

“Yes. It’s not so easy. I suppose we—”

“Or maybe I should go to Mexique. What do you think, Brazil or Mexique?”

I took a few steps away from her. “You know,” I said, “there’s no way that village was in Switzerland. That village was not in Switzerland, that Saint-Julien. That was France, definitely.”

She laughed. “Shall we have a row?” she said. “How can you be so sure? Prove it.”

14.

INT. NIGHT: The man locks the girl in the room and she doesn’t even look round at the sound of the key turning in the lock. When the man returns and opens the door again, the girl is gone.

15.

It is almost three o’clock, overcast, with low, packed, mouse-gray clouds, but no light rain falls as I walk up the steepish street from the lower town to the upper, although now all trace of a division has been erased by almost eighty years of building and development. I pass a dry cleaner, a grocery store, a flower shop, a real-estate agent, and an empty pâtisserie with a “For Sale” sign slipped between the venetian blind and the dusty windowpane.

The church still stands some little way apart, islanded by a wide grass bank and a gravel path, and the cemetery wall is high enough to obscure all but the tallest of tombs. I walk around the foot of the cemetery and pause awhile in the lee of the wall, looking up at the solid stone farmhouse on the hill’s crest and to the left, beside it, a splendid old stone barn. Now there is a single-track, metalled road that winds up between back gardens on one side and a field cropped short by sleek beige cows. I think of John Culpepper and his friend Bob Quentin sheltering here by the cemetery. In their place I would have made for the farm and those thick stone walls, too.

16.

“You know, I’ve had a disturbing thought: he wasn’t really your grandfather,” Irène said, moving to the door.

“No. But we always called him Grandfather Culpepper. I always thought of him as a kind of grandfather. My grandmother always talked about him, how he died in the war, a week before it ended. That’s how I know about this Saint-Julien place, where he died. I’ve seen a photo. I recognized it.”

“Your grandmother married again—”

“In 1927. Had another child—my mother.”

She thought, pushing out her bottom lip. “I tell you what, I’ll bring you your breakfast.”

She leaned forward and kissed me again, but quickly, on the lips. I reached for her. “No,” she said. “I’ll see you in the morning. I have to go now.”

“Black coffee and croissants. For two. What was your disturbing thought?”

FOR C.

After the clash of elevator gates
And the long sinking, she emerges where,
A slight thing in the morning’s crosstown glare,
She looks up toward the window where he waits,
Then in a fleeting taxi joins the rest
Of the huge traffic bound forever west.

On such grand scale do lovers say goodbye—
Even this other pair whose high romance
Had only the duration of a dance,
And who, now taking leave with stricken eye,
See each in each a whole new life forgone.
For them, above the darkling clubhouse lawn,

Bright Perseids flash and crumble; while for these
Who part now on the dock, weighed down by grief
And baggage, yet with something like relief,
It takes three thousand miles of knitting seas
To cancel out their crossing, and unmake
The amorous rough and tumble of their wake.

We are denied, my love, their fine tristesse
And bittersweet regrets, and cannot share
The frequent vistas of their large despair,
Where love and all are swept to nothingness;
Still, there’s a certain scope in that long love
Which constant spirits are the keepers of,

And which, though taken to be tame and staid,
Is a wild sostenuto of the heart,
A passion joined to courtesy and art
Which has the quality of something made,
Like a good fiddle, like the rose’s scent,
Like a rose window or the firmament.

—RICHARD WILBUR

"Oh, yes. Do you realize something?" She was standing in the doorway, leaning back in the doorway, her body canted backward, pleased with herself. I could taste her lipstick on my mouth. "If your Grandfather Culpepper hadn't gotten himself killed at Saint-Julien, you wouldn't be here. Good night."

She straightened, showed me the palms of her hands, shoulders shrugging, eyebrows raised, smiling—the girl who had won the prize with the last question of the quiz show.

"Black coffee and croissants," she said. "For two."

How was I to know I would never see her again?

I met with the duty manager the next day. He looked at me patiently, and not at all intolerantly, as if his training had prepared him for all manner of bizarre requests, far more bizarre than mine.

"We do have a waiter named Jay," he said, "who works in our coffee shop. Jay Duveen. But he's been on vacation for four days. We have no member of staff with the name Irène. Not on our computer, anyway."

He pronounced her name "Eye-rain."

He smiled; his smile was not unkind. "If you could remember her last name, sir, it would be invaluable."

Invaluable. It would be invaluable. Indeed.

"She's Swiss," I said. "Mid-late thirties, tallish, blond. I imagine a friend of this Jay's."

"There are over five hundred employees in this hotel, sir. And I can't begin to tell you how many dozens of temporary staff we hire on a day-by—"

"You've been most helpful."

17.

THE gap between the farmhouse and the gable end of the barn is wider than Bob Quentin remembered. I pace it out—sixteen yards. The farmer and his son stand respectfully some way off, watching this strange middle-aged American investigate a banal angle of their farmyard. "Come on, Bob, let's go, let's go, Bob," John Culpepper had said. I step out from the end of the farmhouse and pace out eight steps, stand equidistant between the farmhouse and the big stone barn. Beneath my feet is longish grass, muddied, trampled somewhat. Below me is the cemetery and beyond that are the ugly semi-industrial outskirts of Saint-Julien, the garages, the discount stores, the agricultural depots. The railway line is there and the slow-moving Meuse. I suppose, near as dammit, I am standing on the spot where John Culpepper died.

The afternoon light up here by the farmhouse is pewtery and cold, and a tarnished silver gleam comes off a loop in the river as the sky clears for an instant. I say goodbye to the farmer and his son ("*Mon grandpère, ah, a été tué ici, en, ah, mille neuf cent dix-huit*") and I walk down through the dew-heavy meadow toward the church. When I'm about two hundred yards from the church I pause and look back at the farmhouse and the barn and the gap of refulgent white sky between them. "Over there, Bob, that's for us, buddy."

Turning again, I see a small figure coming round the cemetery wall. A woman, wearing a dress—or a sweater and skirt—of the palest blue, striding out with a long confident stride, setting off up the hill toward me. A blond woman with loose shoulder-length hair. She waves and calls, and I think she calls my name, but I can't be sure. I can't be sure of anything anymore, because she looks familiar. Coming toward me through the dew-laden grass of the meadow on this cool gray afternoon is a vision, a vision of Irène.

18.

"ON leaving Saint-Julien take G.C. 38. The road is interesting but in bad repair, and care must be taken for the next few kms. The view is impressive. Hill 238, across the valley, is literally plowed up by the shell fire, while not a single tree is left (see photo, p. 18). After crossing the bridge over the Aisne and entering the town, notice the house on the left, No. 8. This is the old post house where Louis XVI was recognized during his flight in 1791. When the royal carriage stopped near this post house in broad daylight the postmaster thought he recognized the King. His fellow-citizens mocked him, accusing him of seeing visions. The postmaster, convinced he was right, followed the carriage all the way to Varennes, where he caught it up, confirmed his suspicions, and had the royal family arrested.

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A CRITIC AT LARGE

A SOCIETY OF ONE

Zora Neale Hurston, American contrarian.

BY CLAUDIA ROTH PIERPONT

IN the spring of 1938, Zora Neale Hurston informed readers of the *Saturday Review of Literature* that Mr. Richard Wright's first published book, "Uncle Tom's Children," was made up of four novellas set in a Dismal Swamp of race hatred, in which not a single act of understanding or sympathy occurred, and in which the white man was generally shot dead. "There is lavish killing here," she wrote, "perhaps enough to satisfy all male black readers." Hurston, who had swept onto the Harlem scene a decade before, was one of the very few black women in a position to write for the pallidly conventional *Saturday Review*. Wright, the troubling newcomer, had already challenged her authority to speak for their race. Reviewing Hurston's novel "Their Eyes Were Watching God" in the *New Masses* the previous fall, he had dismissed her prose for its "facile sensuality"—a problem in Negro writing that he traced to the first black American female to earn literary fame, the slave Phillis Wheatley. Worse, he accused Hurston of cynically perpetuating a minstrel tradition meant to make white audiences laugh. It says something about the social complexity of the next few years that it was Wright who became a Book-of-the-Month Club favorite, while Hurston's work went out of print and she nearly starved. For the first time in America, a substantial white audience preferred to be shot at.

Black anger had come out of hiding, out of the ruins of the Harlem Renaissance and its splendid illusions of justice willingly offered up to art. That famed outpouring of novels and poems and plays of the twenties, anxiously demonstrating the Negro's humanity and cultural citizenship, counted for nothing against the bludgeoning facts of the Depression, the Scottsboro trials, and the first-ever riot in Harlem itself, in 1935. The advent of Richard Wright was a political event as much as a literary one. In American fiction, after all, there was nothing new in the image of the black man as an inarticulate savage for whom rape and murder were a nearly inevitable means of expression. Southern literature was filled with Negro portraits not so different from that of Bigger Thomas, the hero of Wright's 1940 bombshell, "Native Son." In the making of a revolution, all that had shifted was the author's color and the blame.

As for Hurston, the most brazenly impious of the Harlem literary avant-garde—she called them "the niggerati"—she had never fit happily within any political group. And she still doesn't. In this respect, she was the unlikeliest possible candidate for canonization by the black- and women's-studies departments. Nevertheless, since Alice Walker's "In Search of Zora Neale Hurston" appeared in *Ms.* in 1975, interest in this neglected ancestress has developed a seemingly unstoppable momentum. All her major work has been republished (most recently by the Library of America), she is the subject of conferences and doctoral dissertations, and the movie rights to "Their Eyes Were Watching God"—which has sold more than a million copies since 1990—have been bought by Oprah Winfrey and Quincy Jones. Yet, despite the almost sanctified status she has achieved, Hurston's social views are as obstreperous today as they were sixty years ago. For anyone who looks at her difficult life and extraordinary legacy straight on, it is nearly impossible to get this disarming conjure artist to represent any cause except the freedom to write what she wanted.

Hurston was at the height of her powers in 1937, when she first fell seriously out of step with the times. She had written a love story—"Their Eyes Were Watching God"—and become a counter-revolutionary. Against the tide of racial anger, she wrote about sex and talk and work and music and life's unpoisoned pleasures, suggesting that these things existed even for people of color, even in America; and she was judged superficial. By implication, merely feminine. In Wright's account, her novel contained "no theme, no message, no thought." By depicting a Southern small-town world in which blacks enjoyed their own rich cultural traditions, and were able to assume responsibility for their own lives, Hurston appeared a blithely reassuring supporter of the status quo.

The "minstrel" charge was finally aimed less at Hurston's subjects, however, than at her language. Black dialect was at the heart of her work, and that was a dangerous business. Disowned by the founders of the Harlem Renaissance for its association with the shambling, watermelon-eating mockeries of American stage convention, dialect remained an irresistible if highly self-conscious resource for writers, from Langston Hughes and Sterling Brown to Wright himself (whose use of the idiom Hurston gleefully dismissed as tone deaf). But the feat of rescuing the dignity of the speakers from decades of humiliation required a rare and potentially treacherous combination of gifts: a delicate ear and a generous sympathy, a hellbent humor and a determined imperviousness to shame. All this Hurston brought to "Their Eyes Were Watching God"—a book that, despite its slender, private grace, aspires to the force of a national epic, akin to works by Mark Twain or Alessandro Manzoni, offering a people their own language freshly caught on paper and raised to the heights of poetry.

"It's sort of duskin' down dark," observes the otherwise unexceptional Mrs. Sumpkins, checking the sky and issuing the local evening variant of rosy-fingered dawn. "He's uh whirlwind among breezes," one front-porch sage notes of the town's mayor; another adds, "He's got uh throne in de seat of his pants." The simplest men and women of all-black Eatonville have this wealth of images easy at their lips. This is dialect not as a broken attempt at higher correctness but as an extravagant game of image and sound. It is a record of the unique explosion that occurred when African people with an intensely musical and oral culture came up hard against the King James Bible and the sweet-talking American South, under conditions that denied them all outlet for their visions and gifts except the transformation of the English language into song.

HURSTON was born to a family of sharecroppers in tiny Notasulga, Alabama, in 1891—about ten years before any date she ever admitted to. Both her biographer, Robert E. Hemenway, and her admirer Alice Walker, who put up a tombstone in 1973 to mark Hurston's Florida grave (inscribed " 'A Genius of the South' 1901-1960 Novelist, Folklorist, Anthropologist"), got this basic fact as wrong as their honored subject would have wished. Hurston was a woman used to getting away with things: her second marriage license lists her date of birth as 1910. Still, the ruse stemmed not from ordinary feminine vanity but from her desire for an education and her shame at how long it took her to get it. The lie apparently began when she entered high school, in 1917, at twenty-six.

She had been very young when the family moved to Eatonville, Florida, the first incorporated black town in America (by 1914 there would be some thirty of them throughout the South), in search of the jobs and the relief from racism that such a place promised. In many ways, they found precisely what they wanted: John Hurston became a preacher at the Zion Hope Baptist Church and served three terms as mayor. His daughter's depictions of this self-ruled colored Eden have become legend, and in recent years have seemed to hold out a ruefully tempting alternative to the ordeals of integration. The benefits of the self-segregated life have been attested to by the fact that Eatonville produced Hurston herself: a black writer uniquely whole-souled and self-possessed and imbued with (in Alice Walker's phrase) "racial health."

Her mother taught her to read before she started school, and encouraged her to "jump at de sun." Her father routinely smacked her back down and warned her not to act white; the child he adored was her docile older sister. One must go to Hurston's autobiographical novel, "Jonah's Gourd Vine," for a portrait of this highly charismatic but morally weak man, whose compulsive philandering eventually destroyed all he'd built. The death of Zora's mother, in 1904, began a period she would later seek to obliterate from the record of her life. Although her actual autobiography, "Dust Tracks on a Road," is infamously evasive and sketchy (burying a decade does not encourage specificity), it does acknowledge her having been shunted among her brothers' families with the lure of school ever giving way to cleaning house and minding children. And all the while, she recalls, "I had a way of life inside me and I wanted it with a want that was twisting me."

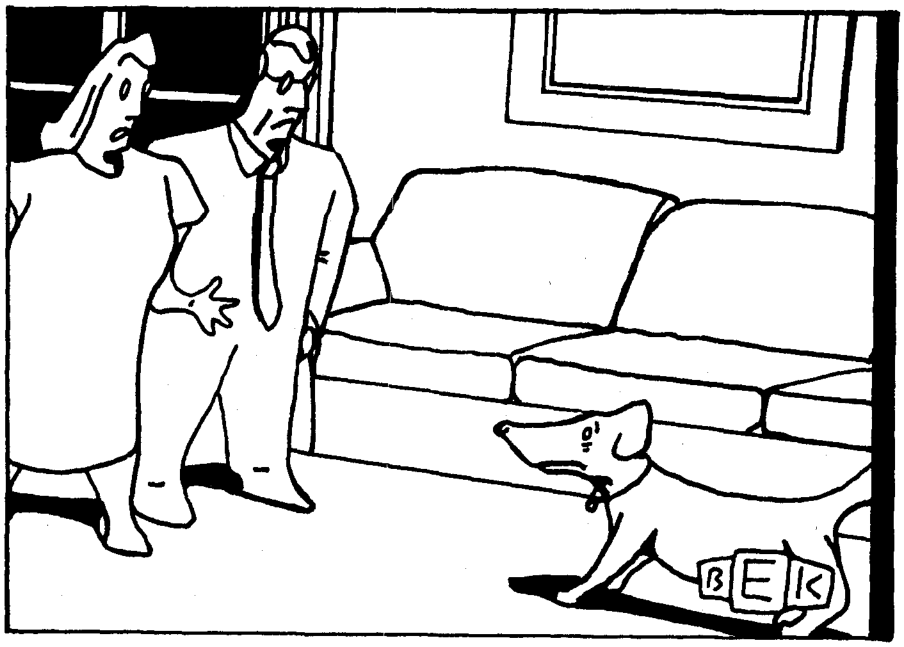
First celebrated, then vilified, and finally idolized, Hurston is a writer who still raises difficult questions.

Working at every kind of job—maid, waitress, manicurist—she managed to finish high school by June, 1918, and went on to Howard University, where she published her first story, in the literary-club magazine, in 1921. Harlem was just then on the verge of vogue, and the Howard club was headed by Alain Locke, founding prince of the Renaissance, a black aristocrat out of Harvard on the lookout for writers with a sense of the "folk." It was what everybody would soon be looking for. The first date that Hurston offers in the story of her life is January, 1925, when she arrived in New York City with no job, no friends, and a dollar and fifty cents in her pocket—a somewhat melodramatic account meant to lower the lights behind her rising glory.

One story had already been accepted by *Opportunity*, the premier magazine of "New Negro" writing. That May, at the first *Opportunity* banquet, she received two awards—one for fiction and one for drama—from such judges as Fannie Hurst, a best-selling, four-handkerchief novelist, and Eugene O'Neill. Hurston's flamboyant entrance at a party following the ceremonies, sailing a scarf over her shoulder and crying out the title of her play—" 'Color Struck'!"—made a greater impression than her work would do for years. This was the new, public Zora, all bravado and laughter, happily startling her audience with the truth of its own preoccupations.

That night, she attached herself to Fannie Hurst, for whom she was soon working as a secretary and then, when it turned out that she couldn't type or keep anything in order, as a kind of rental exotic, complete with outlandish stories and a turban. (Her new boss once tried to pass her off in a segregated restaurant as an African princess.) Hurston's Harlem circle was loudly scornful of the part she was willing to play. For her, though, it was experience: it was not washing floors, it was going somewhere. And the somewhere still hadn't changed. At the banquet she had also met Annie Nathan Meyer, a founder of Barnard College. In the fall of 1925, this ever-masquerading, newly glamorous Scott-within-Zelda of Lenox Avenue enrolled in school again—she had completed less than two years at Howard, and had finagled a scholarship out of Meyer—and discovered anthropology.

Hurston dived headlong into this new field of intellectual possibility, which had been conceived principally by her teacher, Franz Boas, a German-Jewish immigrant who'd founded the department at Co-



"It's not that we don't appreciate the attention. We just feel that it would be healthier for you to focus on something other than us."

• •

lumbia. (Like all his students, Hurston called him Papa Franz, and he teased that of course she was his daughter, "just one of my missteps.") The bedrock of Boas's frankly political theorizing was the adaptability and mutability of the races. Believing that culture and learning have as much influence on human development as heredity, he set out to prove how close the members of the family of man might really be. Probably no one except her mother influenced Hurston more.

Boas's fervent belief in the historic importance of African cultures had already had tremendous impact on W. E. B. Du Bois, and Hurston was similarly inspired by the sense of importance that Boas gave to Southern black culture, not just as a source of entertaining stories but as the transmitted legacy of Africa—and as an independent cultural achievement, in need of preservation and study. Boas literally turned Hurston around: he sent her back down South to put on paper the things that she'd always taken for granted. Furthermore, his sanction gave her confidence in the value of those things—the old familiar talk and byways—which was crucial to the sense of "racial health" and "easy self-acceptance" that so many relish in her work today. It seems safe to say that no black woman in America was ever simply allotted such strengths, no matter how strong she was or how uniformly black her home town. They had to be won, and every victory was precarious.

As a child, Hurston informs us in her autobiography, she was confused by the talk of Negro equality and Negro superiority which she heard in the town all around her: "If it was so honorable and glorious to be black, why was it the yellow-skinned people among us had so much prestige?" Even in first grade, she saw the disparity: "The light-skinned children were always the angels, fairies and queens of school plays." She was not a light-skinned child, although her racial heritage was mixed. If the peculiarities of a segregated childhood spared her the harshest brunt of white racism, the crippling consciousness of color in the black community and in the black soul was a subject she knew well and could not leave alone.

Such color-consciousness has a long history in African-American writing, starting with the first novel written by a black American, William Wells Brown's 1853 "Clotel" (a fantasy about Thomas Jefferson's gorgeous mulatto daughter), which takes color prejudice "among the negroes themselves" as its premise. By 1929, the heroine of Wallace Thurman's bitterly funny novel "The Blacker the Berry . . ." was drenching her face with peroxide before going off to dance in Harlem's Renaissance Casino. But there is no more disconcertingly morbid document of this phenomenon than Hurston's prize-winning "Color Struck." This brief, almost surreal play tracks a talented and very dark-skinned woman's decline into self-destructive madness, a result of her inability to believe that any man could love a woman so black. Although the intended lesson of "Color Struck" seems clear in the retelling, the play's fevered, hallucinatory vehemence suggests a far more complex response to color than Hurston's champions today can comfortably allow—a response not entirely under the author's control.

It would be wrong to say that whites did not figure prominently in Hurston's early life, despite their scarcity. It was precisely because of that scarcity that she took hold of racism not at its source but as it reverberated through the black community. Whites around Eatonville were not the murderous tyrants of Richard Wright's Deep South childhood, but they exerted, perhaps, an equally powerful force—as tantalizing, world-withholding gods, and as a higher court (however unlikely) of personal justice.

There is a fairy-tale aspect to the whites who pass through her autobiography: The "white man of many acres and things" who chanced upon her birth and cut her umbilical cord with his knife; the strangers who would drive past her house and give her rides out toward the horizon. (She had to walk back, and was invariably punished for her boldness.) Most important was a pair of white ladies who visited her school and were so impressed by her reading aloud—it was the myth of Persephone, crossing between realms of dark and light, which, she recalls, she read exceptionally well because it "exalted" her—that they made her a present of a hundred new pennies and the first real books she ever owned.

Hurston's autobiography won an award for race relations, in 1943, and put her on the cover of the *Saturday Review*. The book has since been reviled by the very people who rescued her fiction from oblivion, and for the same reason that the fiction was once consigned there: a sense that she was putting on a song and dance for whites. In fact, there is nothing in "Dust Tracks on a Road" that is inconsistent with the romantic images of white judges and jurors and plantation owners which form a fundamental part of Hurston's most deeply admired work. The heroine of "Their Eyes Were Watching God" ends up on trial for the murder—in self-defense—of the man she loved. (Having been infected by a rabid dog, he lost his senses and came at her with a gun.) The black folks who knew the couple have sided against her at the trial, hoping to see her hanged. It is the whites—the judge and jury and a group of women gathered for curiosity's sake—who see into the anguished depths of a black woman's love, and acknowledge her dignity and her innocence.

Does this reflect honest human complexity or racial confusion? In what world, if any, was Hurston ever at home? While at Barnard, she apparently told the anthropologist Melville Herskovits that, as he put it, she was "more white than Negro in her ancestry." On her first trip back South to gather evidence of her native culture she could not be understood because of her Barnard intonations. She couldn't gain people's confidence; the locals claimed to have no idea what she wanted. When Hurston returned to New York, she and Boas agreed that a white person could have discovered as much.

So she learned, in effect, to pass for black. In the fall of 1927, in need of a patron, she offered her services to Mrs. R. Osgood Mason, a wealthy white widow bent on saving Western culture from rigor mortis through her support of Negro artistic primitivism. For more than three years, Mrs. Mason paid for Hurston to make forays to the South to collect Negro folk material. Hurston's findings were not always as splendidly invigorating nor her attitude as positive as they later appeared. "I have changed my mind about the place," she wrote despairingly from Eatonville, in an unpublished letter of 1932. "They steal everything here, even greens out of a garden." But she became increasingly accomplished at ferreting out what she had been hired to find, and the results (if not always objectively reliable) have proved invaluable. Alan Lomax, who worked with Hurston on a seminal 1935 Library of Congress folk-music-recording expedition, wrote of her unique ability to win over the locals, since she "talks their language and can out-nigger any of them."

The fruits of her field work appeared in various forms throughout the early thirties: stories, plays, musical revues, academic articles. Her research is almost as evident in the 1934 novel "Jonah's Gourd

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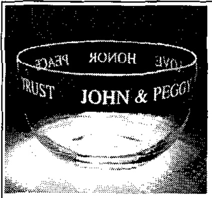

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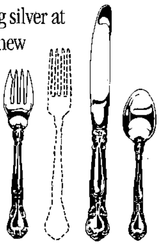

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Vine" as in her book of folklore, "Mules and Men," which appeared the following year. Now routinely saluted as the first history of black American folklore by a black author, "Mules and Men" was faulted by black critics of its own time for its adamant exclusion of certain elements of the Southern Negro experience: exploitation, terror, misery, and bitterness.

By this time, however, Hurston had won enough recognition to go off on a Guggenheim grant to study voodoo practices in the Caribbean. It was not a happy trip. The anecdotal study she produced—"Tell My Horse," published in 1938—is tetchy and belligerent, its author disgusted by the virulent racism of light-skinned mulattoes toward blacks in Jamaica, and as distinctly put out by the unreliability and habitual lying she experienced among the Haitians. In any case, this particular trip had been prompted less by an interest in research than by a need to escape from New York, where she'd left the man she thought of as the love of her life—a still mysterious figure who belongs less to her biography than to her art. In a period of seven weeks, in Haiti, in the fall of 1936, she wrote "Their Eyes Were Watching God," a novel meant to "embalm all the tenderness of my passion for him."

IN her autobiography, Hurston quickly dismisses her first marriage and entirely neglects to mention her second; each lasted only a matter of months. She wed her longtime Howard University boyfriend in May, 1927, and bailed out that August. (Apparently unruffled, Hurston wrote her friends that her husband had been an obstacle, and had held her back.) In 1939, her marriage to a twenty-three-year-old W.P.A. playground worker dissolved with her claims that he drank and his claims that she'd failed to pay for his college education and had threatened him with voodoo. "The great difficulty lies in trying to transpose last night's moment to a day which has no knowledge of it," she writes in "Dust Tracks on a Road." She concludes, "I have come to know by experience that work is the nearest thing to happiness that I can find."

Those admirers who wish Hurston to be a model feminist as well as a racial symbol have seized on the issue of a woman's historic choice between love and work, and have claimed that Hurston instinctively took the less travelled path. On the basis of Hurston's public insouciance, Alice Walker describes, with delicious offhand aplomb, "the way she tended to marry or not marry men, but enjoyed them anyway, while never missing a beat in her work." No sweat, no tears—one for the girls. It is true that Hurston was never financially supported by a man—or by anyone except Mrs. Mason. Hemenway, her biographer, writes that it was precisely because of her desire to avoid "such encroachment" on her freedom that her marriages failed.

Without doubt, Hurston was a woman of strong character, and she went through life mostly alone. She burned sorrow and fear like fuel, to keep herself going. She made a point of not needing what she could not have: whites who avoided her company suffered their own loss; she claimed not to have "ever really wanted" her father's affection. Other needs were just as unwelcome. About love, she knew the way it could make a woman take "second place in her own life." Repeatedly, she fought the pull.

There is little insouciance in the way Hurston writes of the man she calls P.M.P. in "Dust Tracks on a Road." He was "tall, dark brown, magnificently built," with "a fine mind and that intrigued me. . . . He stood on his own feet so firmly that he reared back." In fact, he was her "perfect" love—although he was only twenty-five or so to her forty, and he resented her career. It is hard to know whether his youth or his resentment or his perfection was the central problem. Resolved to "fight myself free from my obsession," she took little experimental trips away from him to see if she could stand it. When she found she couldn't, she left him for good.

Her diligent biographer, who located the man decades later, reports that he had never known exactly what had happened. She'd simply packed her bags and gone off to the Caribbean. Once there, of course, she wrote a book in which a woman who has spent her life searching for passion finally finds it, lets herself go within its embrace, and learns that her lover is honest and true, and that she is not being played for a fool—despite the familiar fact that he is only twenty-five or so and she is forty. (He tells her, "God made it so you spent yo' ole age first wid somebody else, and saved up yo' young girl days to spend wid me.") And then, in the midst of love's perfection, the woman is forced—not out of anger or betrayal but by a hurricane and a mad dog and a higher fate—to shoot him dead, and return to a state of enlightened solitude.

"THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD" brought a heartbeat and breath to all Hurston's years of research. Raising a folk culture to the heights of art, it fulfilled the Harlem Renaissance dream just a few years after it had been abandoned; Alain Locke himself complained that the novel failed to come to grips with the challenges of "social document fiction." The recent incarnation of Hurston's lyric drama as a black feminist textbook is touched with many ironies, not the least of which is the need to consider it as a social document. The paramount ironies, however, are two: the heroine is not quite black, and becomes even less black as the story goes on; and the author offers perhaps the most serious Lawrentian vision ever penned by a woman of sexual love as the fundamental spring and power of life itself.

The heroine of "Eyes," Janie Crawford, is raised by her grandmother, who grew up in "slavery time," and who looks on in horror as black women give up their precious freedom for chains they forge themselves. "Dis love! Dat's just whut's got us uh pullin' and uh haulin' and sweatin' and doin' from can't see in de mornin' till can't see at night." But no one can give a woman what she will not claim. Nanny's immovable goal to see Janie "school out" meets its match in the teenager's bursting sexuality. Apprehensive, Nanny marries her off to a man with a house and sixty acres and a pone of fat on the back of his neck. "But Nanny, Ah wants to want him sometimes. Ah don't want him to do all de wantin'," Janie complains, and she walks off one day down the road, tossing her apron onto a bush.

It isn't exactly Nora slamming the door. There's another man in a buggy waiting for Janie, and another unhappy marriage—this time to a bully who won't let her join in the dazzling talk, the wildly spiralling stories, the earnest games of an Eatonville that Hurston raises up now like a darktown Camelot. After his death, a full twenty years later, she is rather enjoying the first freedom of widowhood when a tall, laughing man enters the general store and asks her to play checkers: "She looked him over and got little thrills from every one of his good points. Those full, lazy eyes with the lashes curling sharply

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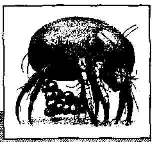

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away like drawn scimitars. The lean, over-padded shoulders and narrow waist. Even nice!"

It's the checkers almost as much as the sex. After Nanny, this man, who is called Tea Cake ("Tea Cake! So you sweet as all dat?"), is the staunchest feminist in the novel. He pushes Janie to play the games, talk the talk, "have de nerve tuh say whut you mean." They get married and set off together to work in the Everglades, picking beans side by side all day and rolling dice and dancing to piano blues at night. Hurston isn't unaware of the harsh background to these lives—trucks come chugging through the mud carrying migrant workers, "people ugly from ignorance and broken from being poor"—but she's willing to leave further study to the Wrights and the Steinbecks. Her concern is with the flame that won't go out, the making of laughter out of nothing, the rhythm, the intensity of feeling that transcends it all.

DURING the nineteen-seventies, when "Their Eyes Were Watching God" was being rediscovered with high excitement, Janie Crawford was granted the status of "earliest . . . heroic black woman in the Afro-American literary tradition." But many impatient questions have since been asked about this new icon. Why doesn't Janie speak up sooner? Why can't she go off alone? Why is she always waiting for some man to show her the way? Apologies have been made for the difficulties of giving power and daring to a female character in 1936, but then Scarlett O'Hara didn't fare too badly with the general public that year. The fact is that Janie was not made to suit independent-minded female specifications of any era. She is not a stand-in for her author but a creation meant to live out other possibilities, which are permitted her in large part because—unlike her author—she has no ambition except to live, and because she is beautiful.

"I got an overwhelming complex about my looks before I was grown," Hurston wrote her friend and editor Burroughs Mitchell in 1947, but went on to declare that she had triumphed over it. "I don't care how homely I am now. I know that it doesn't really matter, and so my relations with others are easier." Despite the possible exaggerations of a moment, this vibrantly attractive woman was well acquainted with what might be called the aesthetic burdens of race ("as ugly as Cinderella's sisters" is a phrase meaning Negro, Hurston reported to Mrs. Mason), and she spared her romantic heroine every one of them.

Janie recalls of an early photograph, "Ah couldn't recognize dat dark chile as me," and by the middle of the book neither can we. By then, we've heard a good deal about her breasts and buttocks and so extraordinarily much about her "great rope of black hair"—a standard feature of the gorgeous literary mulatto—that one critic wrote that it seemed to be a separate character. But it is only when Janie and Tea Cake get to the Everglades and confront the singularly racist Mrs. Turner, eager to "class off" with other white-featured blacks ("Ah ain't got no flat nose and liver lips. Ah'm uh featured woman"), that we hear of Janie's "coffee-and-cream complexion" and "Caucasian characteristics." The transformation is both touching and embarrassing—something like George Eliot's suddenly making Dorothea sublimely beautiful in the Roman-museum scene of "Middlemarch." It's as though the author could no longer withhold from her beloved creation the ultimate reward: Dorothea starts to look like a Madonna, and Janie starts to look white.

With Hurston, though, pride always rushes back in after a fall. These alternating emotional axes are what make her so unclassifiable, so easily susceptible to widely different readings, all of which she may intend. For Janie never acts white, or even seems to care whether she looks that way. She is sincerely mystified by Mrs. Turner's tirades. "We'se uh mingled people," she responds, seeming to rebuke her author's own reflexive notions of beauty, too. "How come you so against black?"

Although Janie spends much of the book struggling to gain the right to speak her mind, she is not particularly notable for her eloquence. There is, however, a great deal of poetry of observation running through her head, which we hear not as her thoughts, precisely, but in the way the story is told. Those who analyze "narrative strategies" have pulped small forests trying to define Hurston's way of slipping in and out of a storytelling voice that sometimes belongs to Janie and sometimes doesn't and, by design, isn't always clear. (As in "Mrs. Dalloway," the effect is of a woman's sensual dispersal through the world.) Janie's panting teen-age sexuality is rendered in a self-consciously

AT THE GALLERIES

LOOK AT US

WHEN the African-American painter William H. Johnson came home to New York in 1938, after living for almost a decade in Scandinavia, his work underwent something like a continental shift in style and intention. Always open to locale and powerful influence (he had married a Danish artist, Holcha Krake), he had turned out a sizable body of art touched at times by the likes of Soutine and Edvard Munch, and, more recently, some roiled, thickly painted landscapes in a loosely Expressionist vein. But almost from the first moments of his residency at the Harlem Community Art Center he began to produce canvases on African-American themes, whose intense colors, pictorial flatness, and bold geometric simplicity seemed to add up to a fresh naïveté, an energetic neo-primitivism that suited the contemporary black American story. Johnson's paintings form part of the "African-American Art: 20th Century Masterworks IV" show, at the Michael Rosenfeld Gallery until March 26th.

Johnson, who was born in Florence, South Carolina, was no Horace Pippin. He had studied intensively at the National Academy of Design, in New York, and had been influenced by George Luks and (through another teacher, Charles W. Hawthorne) by William Merritt Chase, so this late, Afrocentric style represented a radical choice and a means of coming to terms with himself. "I myself feel like a primitive man, like one who is at the same time both a primitive and a cultured painter," he said. His "Three Girls" (opposite), from around 1941, is unusual in its smiles and its fashion-page grouping, but the oval eyes of the women remain masklike and primeval, and unify the subjects' differing strains of lineage and color, upon which he is lightly commenting. These blank white eyes, straight from Africa or the nearest folk-art gallery, appear again and again in Johnson's American paintings, even his most intimate portraits, and convey pride and distance and an insistent, iron-willed privacy.

—Roger Angell

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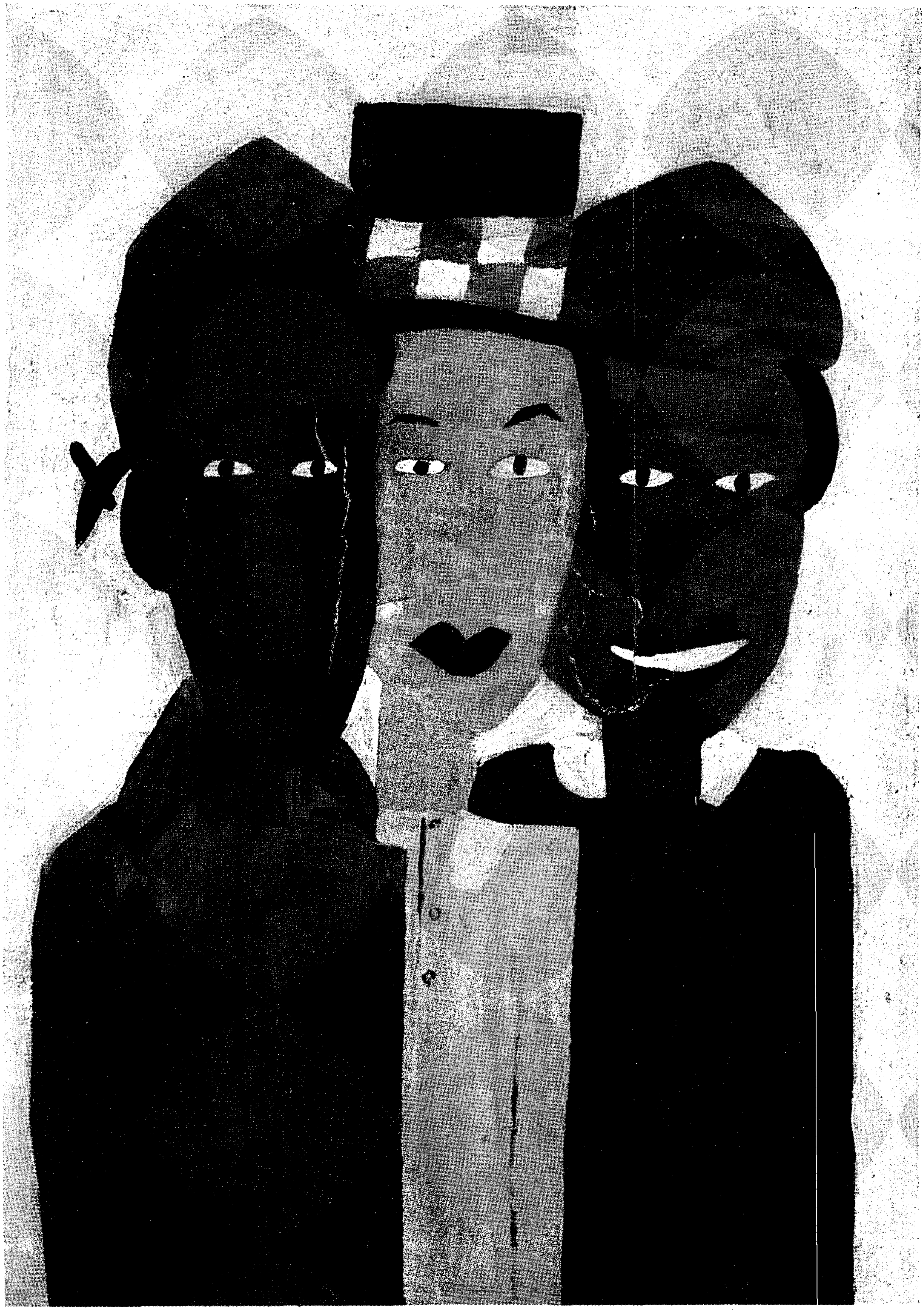

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hyper-adolescent prose of kissing bees and creaming blossoms—prose that Wright seized on for its "facile sensuality" and that Hurston's admirers now quote with dismaying regularity as an example of her literary art. But Hurston at her best is simple, light, lucid, nearly offhand, or else just as simply, Biblically passionate. Janie wakes to see the sun rise: "He peeped up over the door sill of the world and made a little foolishness with red." (There is an archaic sense of power in Hurston's sexing of all things: "Havoc was there with her mouth wide open.") As for Tea Cake, even as Janie tries to push his image away he "seemed to be crushing scent out of the world with his footsteps," Hurston writes. "Crushing aromatic herbs with every step he took. Spices hung about him. He was a glance from God."

This is a sermon from the woman's church of Eros. And, like the sermons in which Hurston was schooled—like her entire book, as it winds in and out of this realization of sexual grace—her message lives in its music. At her truest as a writer, Hurston was a musician. The delightfully quotable sayings that she "discovered" on her field trips (many of which recur as plucked examples in "Mules and Men" and her other books) are embedded in this single volume like folk tunes in Dvořák or Chopin: seamlessly, with beauties of invention often indistinguishable from beauties of discovery. The rhythms of talk in her poetry and the substance of poetry in her talk fuse into a radiant suspension. "He done taught me de maiden language all over," Janie says of Tea Cake, and there may be some truth to the tribute: Hurston had never written this way before, and she never rose to it again. It seems likely that without the intensity of her feelings for "P.M.P." this famously independent woman would not have written the novel that is her highest achievement and her lasting legacy. It perhaps complicates the issue of a woman's life and work that the love she tore herself away from so that she could be free, and free to write, turned out to have been the Muse.

HURSTON'S ability to write fiction seems to have dried up after the commercial failure of "Their Eyes Were Watching God," which sank without a trace soon after publication. Her next novel, "Moses, Man of the Mountain," published in 1939, seems a failed reprise of the Bible-based all-Negro Broadway hit "Green Pastures," with the story of Exodus as its blackface subject. ("Oh, er—Moses, did you ask about them Hebrews while you was knocking around in Egypt?") Gone is the miraculous ear. Gone, too, are her great humor and heart. "Moses" is a weary book, heavy with accumulated resentments. Hurston's disillusionment is fully evident in her mordant, angry journalism of the nineteen-forties, in which she witheringly commends the Southern custom of whites favoring their own "pet Negroes" (and their eager pets returning the favor) as a functioning racial system, and rails against the substandard Negro colleges she calls "begging joints." The title of one article—"Negroes Without Self-Pity"—speaks for itself.

This was her life's theme, and she sounded it all the louder as two new novels were rejected, her poverty went from bohemian to chronic, and her health gave way. She bought a houseboat and spent much of the mid-forties sailing Florida rivers: individualism, her refuge from racism, had lapsed into nearly total isolation. She returned to New York in 1946, looking for work, and wound up in the campaign office of the Republican congressional candidate running against Adam Clayton Powell. When her side lost, she was stranded for a terrible winter in a room on 124th Street, in a different sort of isolation. She didn't ask for help, and she didn't get any. She felt herself slipping, surrounded by racists and haters, the whole city "a basement to Hell."

It was just after this that she wrote her last published novel, "Seraph on the Suwanee." The story of a white Southern woman and her family, it contains no prominent black characters. Among Hurston's supporters, Alice Walker has called it "reactionary, static, shockingly misguided and timid," and Mary Helen Washington has called it "vacuous as a soap opera." Everyone agrees that Hurston had fallen into the common trap of believing that a real writer must be "universal"—that is to say, must write about whites—and that she had simply strayed too far from the sources that fed her. In fact the book is poisonously fascinating, and suggests, rather, that she came too close.

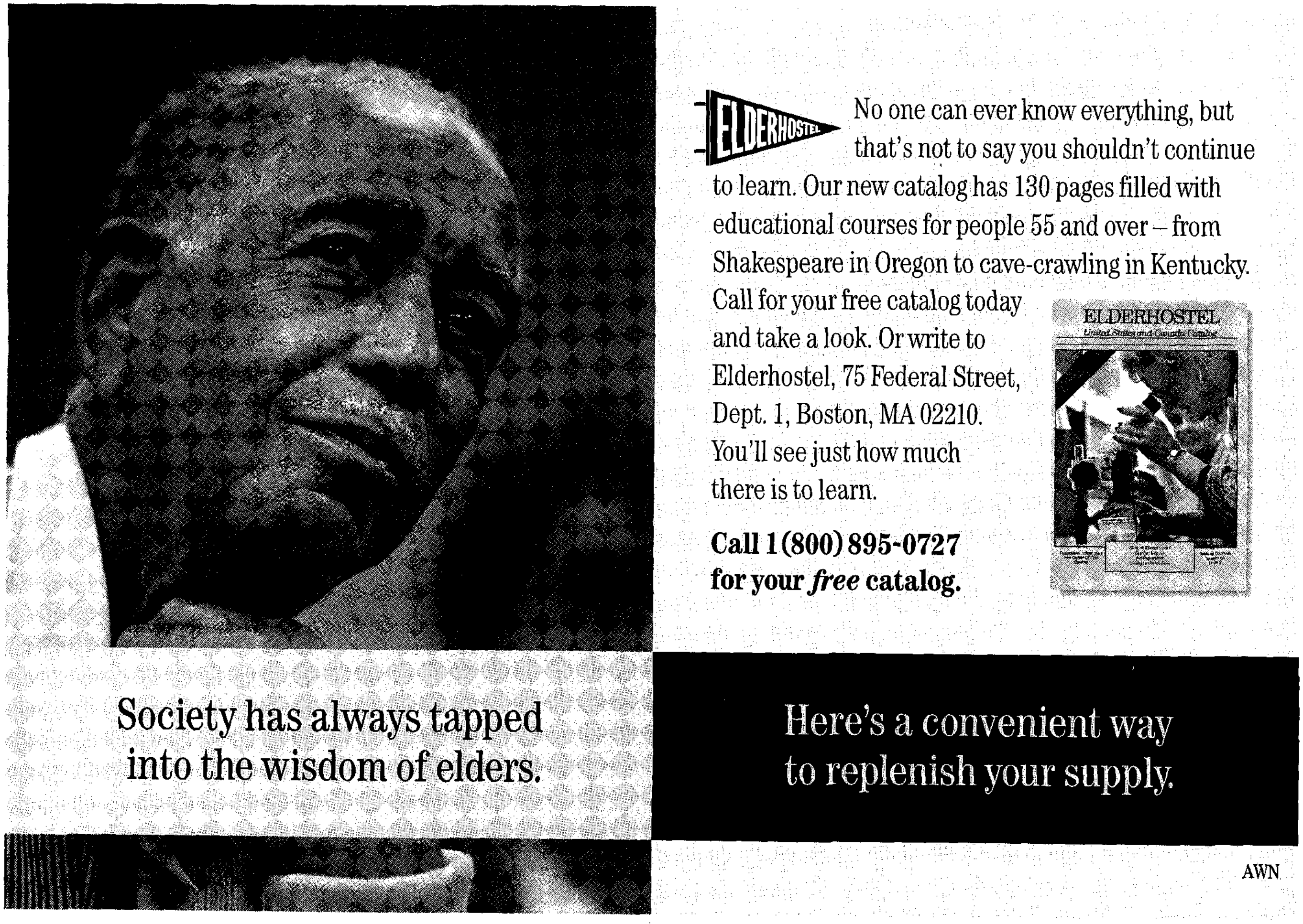
The story of beautiful, golden-haired Arvay Henson, who believes herself ugly and unworthy of love, contains many echoes of Hurston's earlier work, but its most striking counterpart is the long-ago play "Color Struck." The works set a beginning and an end to years of struggle with their shared essential theme—the destructive power of fear and bitterness in a woman's tortured psyche. Arvay is born to a poor-white "cracker" family; in a refraction of Hurston's own history, a preference for her older sister "had done something to Arvay's soul across the years." She falls in love with a magnificent fallen aristocrat, who rapes her—for Arvay this is an act of ecstatic, binding possession—and marries her. Tormented by her failure to live up to his perfection, she comes to hate him almost as much as she hates herself.

The book is a choking mixture of cynicism and compulsion. Hurston was desperate for a success, and hoped for a movie sale—hence, no doubt, the formulaic rape and the book's mawkish ending, in which Arvay learns to sing happily in her marital chains. But to reach this peace Arvay must admit, after years of pretense, that she is not really proud of her own miserably poor and uneducated family, that poverty and ignorance lend them neither moral superiority nor charm, and that she is, in fact, shamed and disgusted by them. Arvay's last attempt to go home to her own people results in her burning down the house in which she was raised.

The book was sharply criticized because Hurston's white Southerners speak no differently from the Eatonville blacks of her earlier work. The inflections, the rhythms, the actual expressions that had been declared examples of a distinctive black culture were all now simply transferred to white mouths. The incongruous effects, as in her "Moses" book, point to a failure of technique, an aural exhaustion. But in a letter to her editor Hurston gave an even more dispiriting explanation for what she'd done. "I think that it should be pointed out that what is known as Negro dialect in the South is no such thing," she wrote, in a repudiation nearly as sweeping as Arvay's, at once laying waste to her professional past and her extraordinary personal achievement. The qualities of Southern speech—black and white alike, she claimed—were a relic of the Elizabethan past preserved by Southern whites in their own closed and static society. "They did *not* get it from the Negroes. The Africans coming to America got it from them."

The novel's publication, in the fall of 1948, was swallowed up in a court case that tested all Hurston's capacity for resisting bitterness. That September, in New York, an emotionally disturbed ten-year-old boy accused her of sexual molestation. The Children's Society filed charges, and Hurston was arrested and indicted. Although the case was eventually thrown out, a court employee spilled the news to one of the city's black newspapers—the white papers were presumably not interested—and the lurid story made headlines. Hurston contemplated suicide, but slowly came back to herself on a long sailing trip.

She never returned to New York. For the rest of her life, she lived in Florida, on scant money and whatever dignity she was able to salvage. In Miami, she worked as a maid. Later, she moved to a cabin up the coast that rented for five dollars a week, where she grew much of her own food. She labored over several books, none considered publishable. Her radical independence was more than ever reflected in her politics: fervently anti-Communist, officially Republican, resisting anything that smacked of special pleading. When Brown v. Board of Education was decided, in 1954, she was furious—and wrote furiously—over the implication that blacks could learn only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when seated next to whites, or that anyone white should be forced to sit beside anyone black. It was plain "insulting." Although there was some hard wisdom in her conclusion—"the next ten years would be better spent in appointing truant officers and looking after conditions in the homes from which the children come"—her defiant segregationist position was happily taken up by whites of the same persuasion. Her reputation as a traitor to her people overshadowed and outlasted her reasoning, her works, and her life.

Hurston died in January, 1960, in the Saint Lucie County welfare home, in Fort Pierce, Florida, four days before the first sit-in took place, at a Woolworth lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. She was buried in an unmarked grave in a segregated cemetery in Fort Pierce. All her books were out of print. In 1971, in one of the first important reconsiderations of writers of the Harlem Renaissance, the critic Darwin Turner wrote that Hurston's relative anonymity was understandable, for, despite her skills, she had never been more than a "wandering minstrel." He went on to say that it was "eccentric but perhaps appropriate"—one must pause over the choice of words—for her "to return to Florida to take a job as a cook and maid for a white family and to die in poverty." There was a certain justice in these actions, he declared, in that "she had returned to the level of life which she proposed for her people."

THE gleaming two-volume Library of America edition of Hurston's "Novels & Stories" and "Folklore, Memoirs, & Other Writings" makes for a different kind of justice. These books bring Hurston a long way from the smudged photocopies that used to circulate, like samizdat, at academic conventions, and usher her into the national literary canon in highly respectable hardback. She is the fourth African-American to be published in this august series, and the fifth woman, and the first writer who happens to be both. Although the Hurston revival may have been driven in part by her official double-victim status—a possibility that many will take as a sign that her literary status has been inflated—"Their Eyes Were Watching God" can stand unsupported in any company. Harold Bloom has written of Hurston as continuing in the line of the Wife of Bath and Falstaff and Whitman, as a figure of outrageous vitality, fulfilling the Nietzschean charge that we try to live as though it were always morning.

Outside of fiction, this kind of strength is mainly a matter of determination. For many who have embodied it in literature—Nietzsche, Whitman, Lawrence, Hurston—it is a passionate dream of health (dreamed while the simply healthy are sound asleep) which stirs a rare insistence and bravado. "Sometimes, I feel discriminated against, but it does not make me angry," Hurston wrote in 1928. "It merely astonishes me. How *can* any deny themselves the pleasure of my company!" In the venerable African-American game of "the dozens," the players hurl monstrous insults back and forth as they try to rip each other apart with words. (Hurston and Wright both call up the game, and quote the same now rather quaint chant of abuse: "Yo' mama don't wear no DRAWS, Ah seen her when she took 'em OFF"). The near-Darwinian purpose was to get so strong that, no matter what you heard about whomever you loved, you

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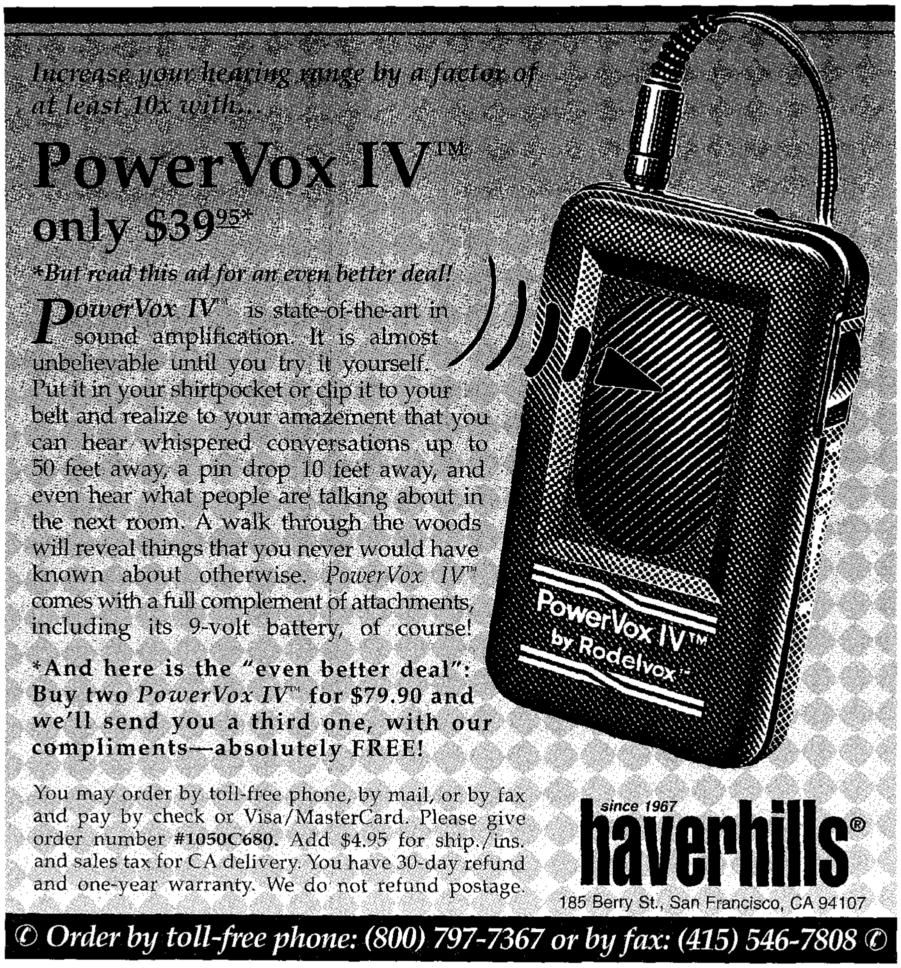
would not let on that you cared to do anything but laugh. It's a game that Richard Wright must have lost every time. But Zora Neale Hurston was the champ.

It is important not to blink at what she had to face and how it made her feel. Envy, fury, confusion, desire to escape: there is no wonder in it. We know too well the world she came from. It is the world she rebuilt out of words and the extraordinary song of the words themselves—about love and picking beans and fighting through hurricanes—that have given us something entirely new. And who is to say that this is not a political achievement? Early in "Their Eyes Were Watching God" Hurston describes a gathering of the folks of Eatonville on their porches at sundown: "It was the time to hear things and talk. These sitters had been tongueless, earless, eyeless conveniences all day long. Mules and other brutes had occupied their skins. But now, the sun and the bossman were gone, so the skins felt powerful and human. They became lords of sounds and lesser things. They passed notions through their mouths. They sat in judgment."

The powerless become lords of sounds, the dispossessed rule all creation with their tongues. Language is not a small victory. It was out of this last, irreducible possession that the Jews made a counterworld of words, the Irish vanquished England, and Russian poetry bloomed thick over Stalin's burial grounds. And in a single book one woman managed to suggest what another such heroic tradition, rising out of American slavery, might have been—a literature as profound and original as the spirituals. There is the sense of a long, ghostly procession behind Hurston: what might have existed if only more of the words and stories had been written down decades earlier, if only Phillis Wheatley had not tried to write like Alexander Pope, if only literate slaves and their generations of children had not felt pressed to prove their claim to the sworn civilities. She had to try to make up for all of this, and more. If out of broken bits of talk and memory she pieced together something that may once have existed, out of will and desire she added what never was. Hurston created a myth that has been gratefully mistaken for history, and in which she herself plays a mythic role—a myth about a time and place fair enough, funny enough, unbitter enough, glad enough to have produced a woman black and truly free. ♦



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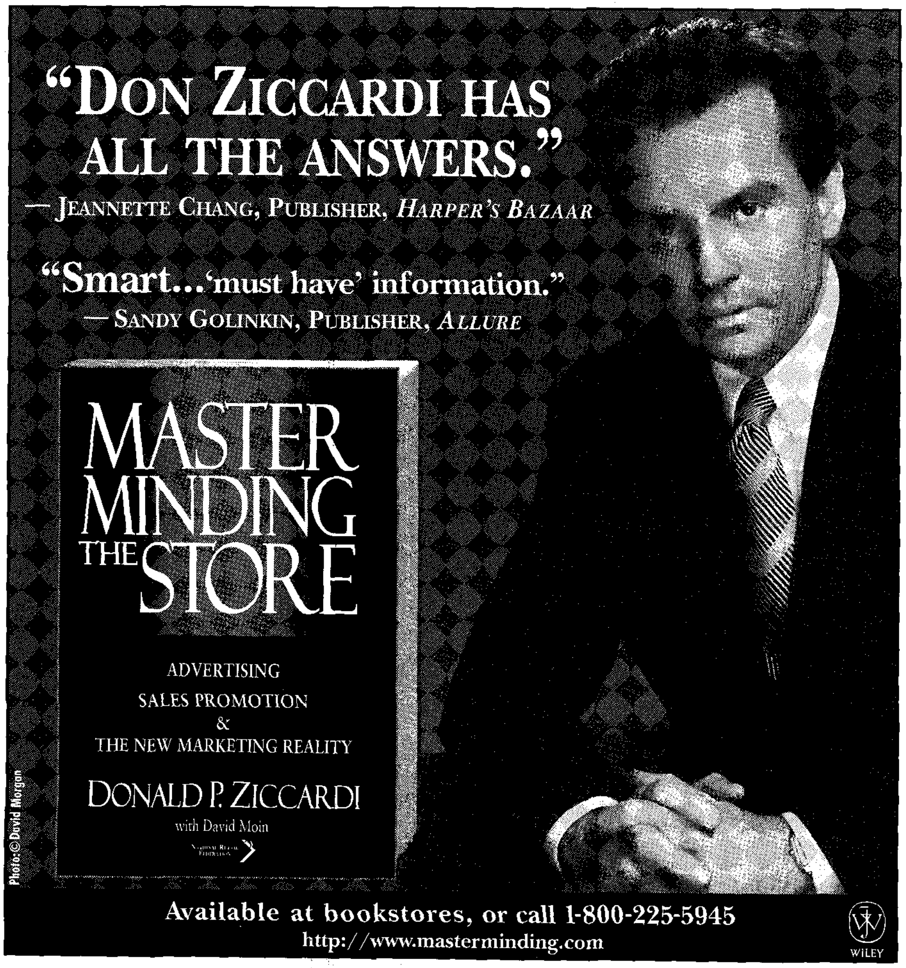

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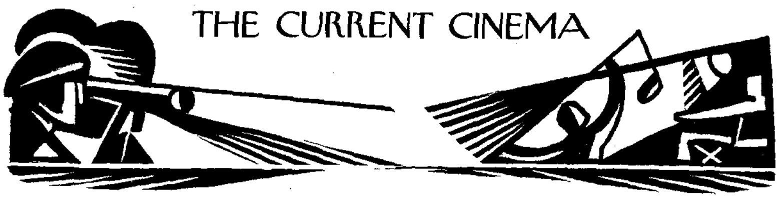

THE CURRENT CINEMA

THRILLAHS

Ali in the ring, Rafelson on the ropes.

BY ANTHONY LANE

WHEN rhetoricians look back or listen in on the second half of this century, what will they hear? Whose will be the undefeated voice? No contest. "You told everybody I don't have a chance. You told 'em I don't have nothing but a prayer. Chump, all I need *is* a prayer, because if that prayer reaches the right man, not only will George Foreman fall, the mountains will fall." Received wisdom has it that Muhammad Ali was something of a bigmouth. So much for wisdom. Bigness of mouth is an affliction confined to the small of spirit, to those whose actions lag behind their words. But Ali meant what he said, and he did what he meant to do; the mouth was a perfect fit.

No wonder Leon Gast opens his fine documentary "When We Were Kings" with an Ali speech. The film purports to tell the story of the Ali-Foreman fight, the Rumble in the Jungle, which took place in Zaire, under a rain of hype and the threat of monsoon, in the fall of 1974. But it takes a long time to get to the bout, which, partly for reasons of legal wrangling, has hardly been seen since. So Gast fills the time with talk and music—with commentators like Norman Mailer and George Plimpton, both of whom were ringside, and with stars like James Brown and B. B. King, who played soul and blues to swell the event. Above all, there is Ali, revelling in the instant divinity that was bestowed upon him by a people who were otherwise required to worship a despot. Ali lost his crown and his motor skills years ago, whereas President Mobutu is still in power, and today is lending his blessing to the genocidal cause of the Hutus in Rwanda; you can't help wishing that Gast had had the nerve to ask the Zaireans which of the two, even now, they revere more.

It says a lot for Ali that James Brown, not generally known for his wallflower abilities, emerges from this movie as a shrinking violet, and that you want to hurry through his songs and cut to the chase. It was less of a chase, of course, than anyone had predicted: having informed the world that he would dance, Ali did not deign to dance, preferring to lean back against the ropes and have Foreman use him as a punching bag. "Ali swung like a man in the rigging," says Mailer, who still talks about the Rumble as if it had happened last night. He remembers Ali taunting Foreman under the welter of body blows. "George, you disappoint me," Ali said. "You're not breaking popcorn." And then, in the eighth, the king came off his throne. To report what happened next feels like giving away the plot of a murder mystery—which, in a way, it was. Best to keep it secret, I think, just in case there are any young viewers of this picture who, lucky devils, don't know the result. They may also care to analyze one of the hero's comical-Biblical outbursts: "Only last week I murdered a rock, Injured a stone, Hospitalized a brick. I'm so mean I make *medicine* sick." So now we know. Among his many other accomplishments, Muhammad Ali invented rap.

"BLOOD AND WINE" is bad for you. It looks and sounds like a thriller, parts of it are set in Key Largo, and it comes complete with car chase, stolen necklace, and the kind of conversation that runs like this: "Is he dead?" "Not enough." All of which should, by rights, make moviegoers very happy indeed. But "Blood and Wine" is directed by Bob Rafelson, who has never been one to cheer us up. "The Postman Always Rings Twice" could have been fun, yet it was a lowering bruiser of a film, and you come out of "Blood and Wine" checking yourself for signs of damage. The characters keep laying into each other, as if to slam home the message—for what it's

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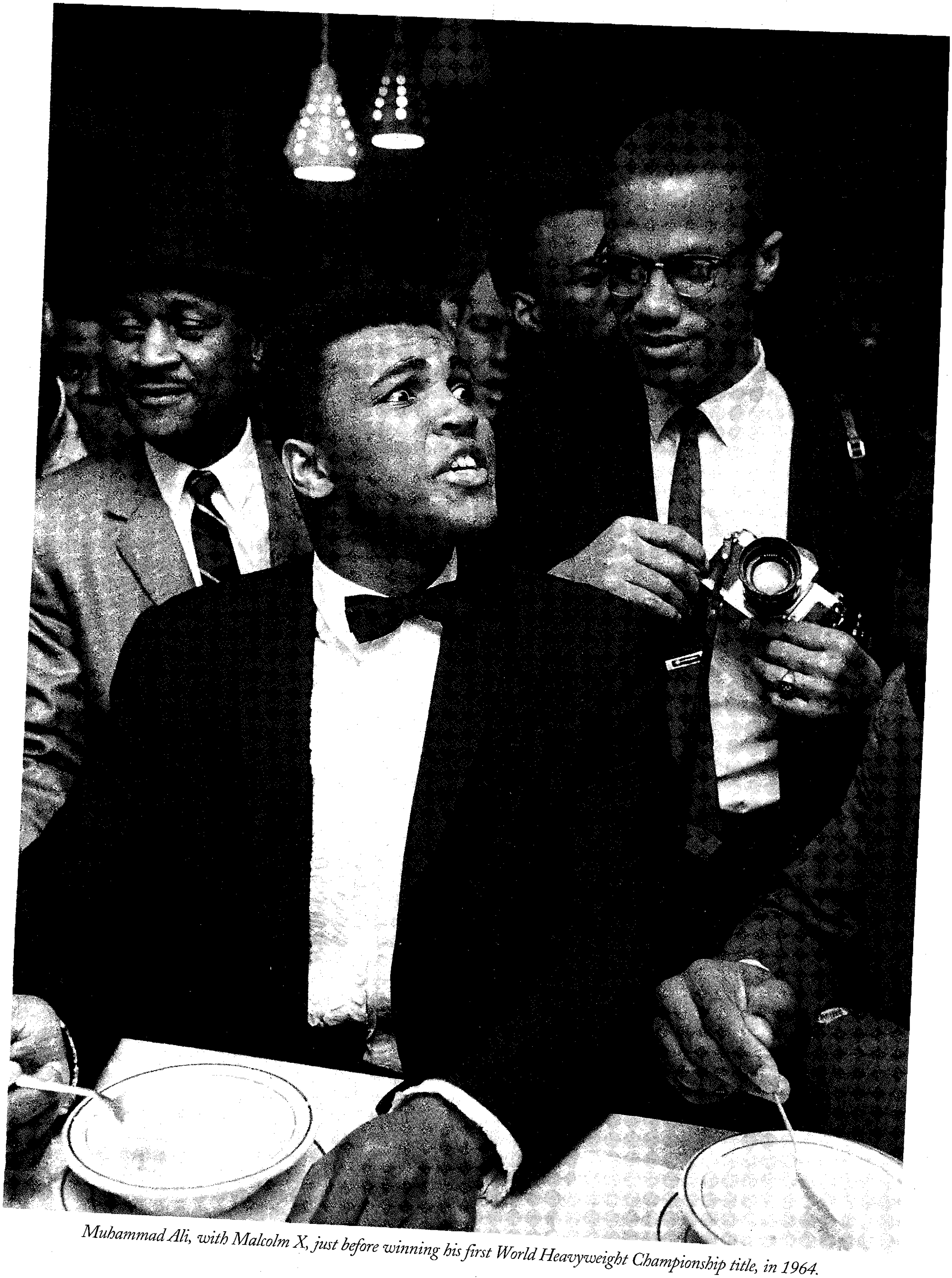


Muhammad Ali, with Malcolm X, just before winning his first World Heavyweight Championship title, in 1964.

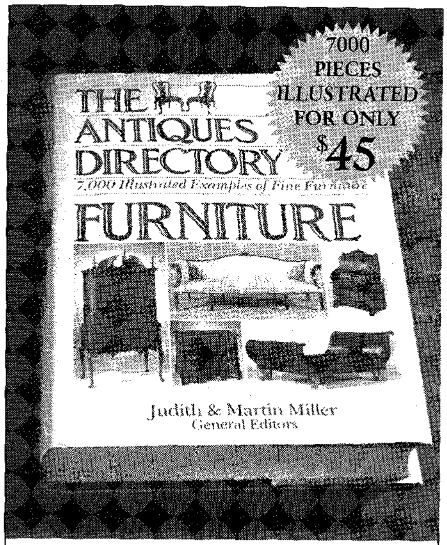
worth—that everybody hurts sometime.

Leading the fray is Alex Gates (Jack Nicholson), a Florida wine merchant who appears to have everything going for him, not least a red BMW convertible. This means, of course, that he is heading for a whole lot of nothing: his business has sprung a leak, and his wife, Suzanne (Judy Davis), looks ready to hate his guts. If it's any consolation, she still likes him better than her son, Jason (Stephen Dorff), ever will. Jason is Alex's stepson, and his life is tied to the beach; the opening scene finds him fishing at dawn, using a pickup truck to haul in his stubborn catch. He arrives home fragrant with fish, and Alex tells him to change his shirt. This is a casual suggestion, but Nicholson gives the line such a tight sneer, and Dorff bites back with such resentment, that you know it's only a matter of time before these two come to grief. Just to add to the fun, Alex is contemplating a crime: together with his pal Victor Spansky (Michael Caine), a safecracker with a breathtaking case of asthma, he plans to rip off a rich client. It so happens that the client employs a home help, Gabriella (Jennifer Lopez)—who, needless to say, is Alex's mistress.

Not that Rafelson is unnerved by a tangled plot. He spins a beautiful line, and I remember the glee of being caught and trapped by the shock finale of "Black Widow." But Rafelson also likes to think through and around his tales, to gloss them with rumination, and "Black Widow" was so deft at evading vulgarity—the natural vulgarity of the hot whodunit—that you were left unsatisfied by a picture that couldn't decide what it wanted to be. The same queasiness creeps into "Blood and Wine," whose hunger for heavy mood and unwincing scrutiny of violence take the edge off its desire to tell the story at a decent lick. Suzanne, for instance, has a fight with Alex, cracks him over the eye, and takes off with Jason in tow; you sense the movie beginning to hum and accelerate, but a closeup of Alex sewing his own wound in the mirror slows your enthusiasm to a crawl.

The suitcase that Suzanne packs in haste contains, among other things, the necklace. From here on, she and Jason are on the run. Jolted by the electric nervousness that only Judy Davis can give off, you start to wonder just how Oedipal this movie is going to be. She and Dorff look close enough in age, and in their quality of desperation, to register an unmistakable need for each other, and, even if they fail to take it any further, it thickens the general air of mismatched hormones. Jason fancies Gabriella, but not for a long while does he know that she is already sleeping—and dancing, and drinking—with his stepfather. He eventually stumbles upon the truth by finding her in Alex's bed, alone. Let's just say that things don't get any easier. So much about this movie is homemade, solemnly circling back to where it began: Alex goes crazy hunting for his stepson and his lover, only to find them enjoying a peaceful breakfast on the veranda of the family house.

The close rhythm of "Blood and Wine" gets to you pretty fast, but it's not enough to carry you through, and, as the climax came near, with Alex and Jason scrapping aboard a boat, I was surprised to find my attention drifting out to sea. Rafelson has assembled all the makings of a sticky and paranoid thriller, something in the mold of "Cutter's Way" or "Night Moves," yet by those standards his picture seems to grow smaller and more contrived, less resonant of larger fears. The best reason to see it is the downbeat accuracy of the performances: Caine, raddled and rasping, is barely able to summon the puff to blow on the tip of his cigarette—he could be Harry Palmer, of "The Ipcress File," gone to the bad or retired sick, come to America to make or mar his fortune one last time. As for Nicholson, he goes way back with Rafelson: they wrote "Head" together for the Monkees, and made "Five Easy Pieces" in 1970 and "The King of Marvin Gardens" two years later. That double bill looks better and better as time passes; you couldn't hope to make such movies—works that are themselves so deeply suspicious of hope—in the Hollywood of today. For all the blood (there's not enough wine, and Alex drains his glass with a glug that no true buff would permit), "Blood and Wine" is more melancholy than vicious, and much of the sadness rises from a feeling that both Rafelson and Nicholson are trying to sneak one of their old, intuitive character studies—one of their wanderer fantasies—in through the gaps of a formula. When Alex warns Gabriella, "Do me a favor. Don't love me," it's not just an enforcement of noir principles; it's an amazing plea to hear from the mouth of Jack Nicholson. Can you remember a time when Jack didn't ask to be loved? ◆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MUSICAL EVENTS

NATIVE SONS

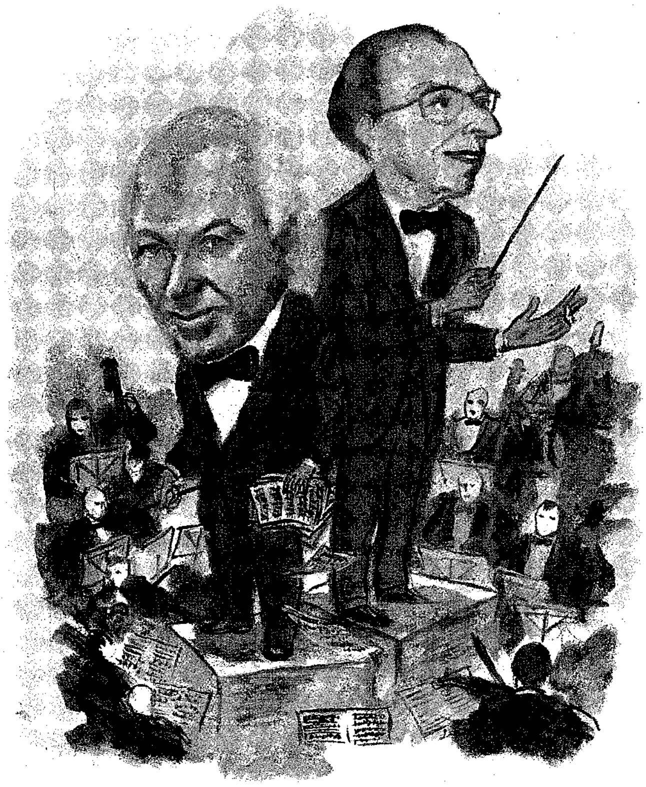
In pursuit of the Great American Symphony.

BY ALEX ROSS

"I WAS born on a street in Brooklyn that can only be described as drab. . . . Music was the last thing anyone would have connected with it. In fact, no one had ever connected music with my family or with my street. The idea was entirely original with me." This is from an autobiographical sketch by Aaron Copland, who piloted American classical music to its populist heyday in the nineteen-thirties and forties. Underneath the tone of triumph is a trace of bitterness: Copland hints at how hard—how damn hard—it is to be a composer in America.

A few days ago, I walked to the corner of Dean Street and Washington Avenue, where Copland grew up, above his father's department store. Although the site is now a trash-strewn empty lot, two kids in bright jackets were improvising rap at the edge of it. I had trouble imagining that there was no music here in Copland's youth. But what music there was would not have been *his* kind of music, which was classical music. Copland had complicated dreams: he wanted not only to find an individual voice but also to propagate a mythic national style drawn from all the various traditions of American music—folk, religious, rural, ethnic. For a time, he succeeded: in the New Deal era, he and his contemporaries won unprecedented recognition from American musical institutions, particularly the great urban symphony orchestras.

American music keeps gazing back longingly to that time—to what the critic Samuel Lipman called "the years of hope." The New York Philharmonic has been playing once famous, now half-forgotten American symphonies all this season: works of Copland, Roy Harris, Howard Hanson, Samuel Barber, Walter Piston, and others who were born a few years before or after 1900. Several conductors—notably Michael Tilson Thomas, in San Francisco; Leonard Slatkin, in Washington; Gerard Schwarz, in Seattle; and Neeme Järvi, in Detroit—have undertaken similar projects. The Ninety-second Street Y recently launched a Project America 1997 series with a con-



While Henry Cowell (left) was prowling the margins, Aaron Copland (right) spoke to the masses.

GERARD NICOLAS

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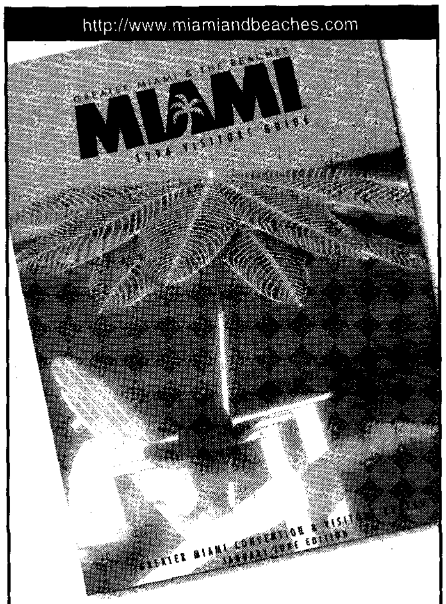
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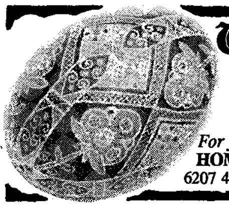

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cert entitled "What Is American Music?" Underlying all this activity is the widely held conviction that if classical music is to flourish in this country it must somehow return to Copland's master plan.

It's strange that this repertory should need revival, since its language is all around us. From old folk tunes and hymns, barn-dance rhythms, blues harmony, and other pieces of a complex native history, Copland and others assembled an American musical vocabulary that is still very much in use. (Intimations of Copland's "Appalachian Spring" accompany most film and television footage of the open prairie.) Their music was, for the most part, bold and simple. It seemed to be written more for radio than for the concert hall: blasts of brass and percussion could break through the haze of the wireless. In the age of Toscanini, orchestral music reached immense broadcast audiences, and composers went chasing after what Leonard Bernstein called "that Great American Symphony."

What, exactly, happened to these American Classics, as the Philharmonic calls them? Committed partisans argue that they are ill-treated masterpieces, swept aside by the esoteric triumph of European modernism after the Second World War. And, indeed, it's difficult to understand why we don't hear more performances of, say, Roy Harris's Third Symphony—an impeccably all-American hymn and dance for orchestra, rugged in sound and sleek in design. Last fall, the Philharmonic, under Zdenek Macal, gave it a solid, well-balanced reading. The neighboring work was Beethoven's Fifth, and Harris's symphony suffered remarkably little by comparison.

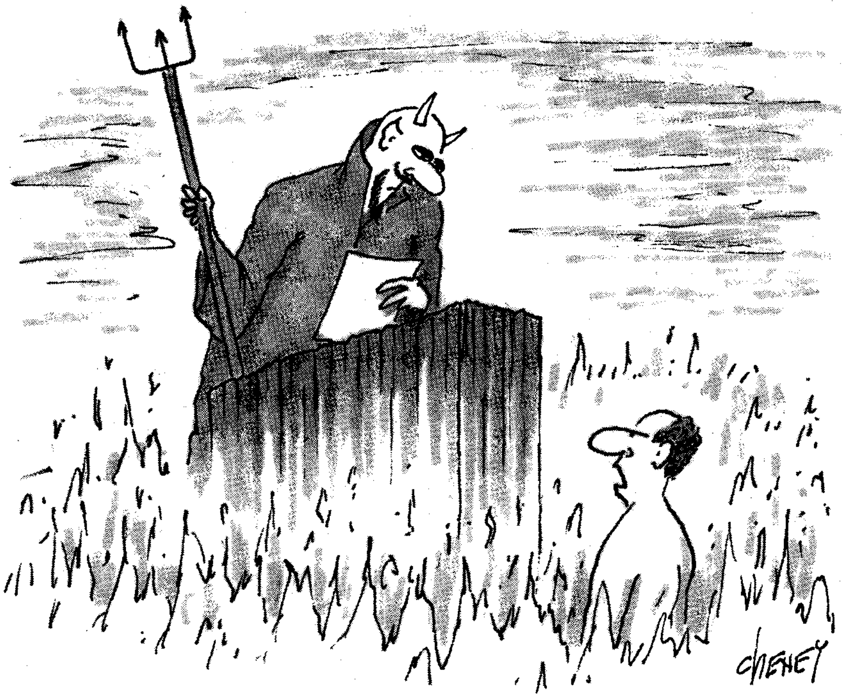
Disappointment sets in when one goes seeking the same thrill from Harris's twelve other symphonies. He repeated his formula, but never with the same confidence. It's a familiar pattern: early promise, early triumph, then a long and lonely winding down. A similar story could be told of William Schuman, Howard Hanson, and even Bernstein. The classical repertory favors composers whose voice has equal force in all periods of their career. But why shouldn't we be as tolerant of imperfect careers in American music as we are of imperfect careers in American literature? Harris is a musical Dos Passos, starting strong and then meandering.

A kind of reverse effect appears with the two symphonies of Samuel Barber. Here was a composer who wrote insistently memorable music at every stage of his career, but his voice was heard to best advantage in songs, chamber music, and mood pieces like the famous Adagio for Strings. He was less confident on the public stage of the Great American Symphony. His First Symphony, which Slatkin conducted at the Philharmonic in December, begins imposingly, unfolds a transfixing melody in the slow movement, and ends with strangely hollow gestures. Barber always struggled with the larger forms. It is sad to read, in Barbara Heyman's biography, of his agonies over the wartime Second, a work that was dedicated to the Air Force. By 1964, he was roaming the G. Schirmer publishing library and tearing up every copy of the score that he could find.

The composers of this time periodically overreached themselves with Empire State Building-size symphonic utterances. Even Copland, the master of Americana, came up short in his large-scale Third, composed in 1946. Slatkin is devoted to the piece and will bring it to the Philharmonic in May. By way of his well-argued recording, I have been trying to hear the Third as something other than effortful propaganda, a democrat's embrace of socialist realism. I still find more to admire in Copland's ferociously expressive piano music, and in his shorter orchestral scores of the late twenties and early thirties (the best of which appear on a strong new Tilson Thomas disk entitled "Copland the Modernist").

Still, the Great American Symphonies have many great moments, and the American Classics series has made canny choices. Perhaps because of the infusion of old Bernstein repertory, the Philharmonic has, this season, been livelier in spirit. We've also had a couple of interesting premières: George Perle's "Transcendental Modulations" and Leon Kirchner's "Music for Cello and Orchestra" (a New York première, with Yo-Yo Ma). It should be noted, however, that these elder-statesman composers look more to the European than to the American past. Perle continues the subtle negotiation of consonance and dissonance which he inherited from Alban Berg. Kirchner argues his way through dissonance to tonality, but he arrives at a passage for full strings which recalls nothing so much as the late-Romantic rapture of Erich Wolfgang Korngold.

The Philharmonic might profitably have turned to some of the younger Americans who are resuming the populist symphonic mission. I'm thinking in particular of Aaron Jay Kernis, whose two symphonies are marked by irresistible energy and an uncommon personal voice. This composer is not simply trying to ape past successes: he has learned from minimalism, the fast processes of post-serialism,



"Why wasn't a list of these sins made available to me, and why wasn't I allowed to have it examined by my own experts?"

snippets of pop. Yet his glowing lyrical episodes seem to pick up where Barber left off in frustration. His newly recorded Second Symphony is as strong as any in the Philharmonic series. Oddly, it's an English orchestra, the City of Birmingham Symphony, that plays on the Argo disk. Most American orchestras are running about fifty years behind.

THE glorious California eccentric Henry Cowell belonged to the Copland generation, but he inhabited another world. He would have turned one hundred on March 11th, and the celebrations are surprisingly elaborate. Juilliard's Focus! festival honored Cowell during the last week of January; the University of California at Berkeley had a Cowell festival immediately afterward; and a two-week tribute will follow in March, under the auspices of the American Music Institute at Brooklyn College. This attention says something about changing perspectives on American music: the populists had their day, then the modernists and the neo-Romantics, and now the hour has apparently struck for California dreamers. John Adams, a longtime Berkeley resident, is the best-known composer of his generation; and the soon-to-be octogenarian Lou Harrison has made astonishing leaps in popularity.

Who was Cowell? some might ask. He was a certified boy genius who studied at Berkeley with the radical musicologist Charles Seeger. In 1914, the teen-age Cowell gave a piano concert in which he demonstrated his "tone clusters"—chords played with the fist or forearm. This was the least of his inspirations. He wrote reams of music for every conceivable arrangement of instruments; theorized everything from serialism to chance and the complex rhythmic layering that New York composers call totalism; toured the world in search of new sounds; and incorporated it all into ingenious elastic forms. He never set out simply to shock. His noises were more beautiful than brutal, and his melodies could be naïvely sublime. He was as genial as Copland was strict.

Actually, Cowell and Copland make for an interesting comparison. Both were great organizers and promoters, generous to colleagues. Copland showed the way to orchestral fame: he was the talent scout for Serge Koussevitzky's innumerable Boston Symphony premières. Cowell took what punk rockers call a do-it-yourself approach: he set up his own publishing operation (the extraordinary *New Music*), his own record company (New Music Quarterly Recordings), his own concert series. And whereas Copland gradually fell silent as a composer later in life, Cowell happily spewed forth music right up to his death.

Not much Cowell is heard in concerts, and not much is available on recordings. Joel Sachs, the Focus! director, has helped maintain the composer's New York reputation, in collaboration with Cheryl Seltzer in concerts by Continuum. This year, expert young Juilliard players threw themselves into, among other things, the Variations for Orchestra, with its spine-tingling rhythmic fantasia for piano and percussion, and the "Madras" Symphony, a long but hypnotic homage to Indian string music. Cowell's way with symphonies was completely different from that of his Eastern colleagues; his offbeat forms and instrumentations lead one to suspect that he was toying with the genre.

Just as the Juilliard festival ended, I travelled to Berkeley for a weekend devoted to Cowell and various composers whom he inspired. Organized by Sarah Cahill, the director of Bay Area Pianists, the festival consisted exclusively of piano music. Throughout, Cowell's uses and misuses of the piano never ceased to astonish the ear, despite some repetitions of pieces and a marathon programming style. Cahill, Sorrel Hays, and Chris Brown played with a virtuosity that demonstrated Cowell's precise command of his peculiar art. The standout among many premières was Carl Stone's "Sa Rit Gol," in which Cahill played a madly accelerating duet with a computer-controlled piano.

Cowell's career, like so many American careers in music, was uneven. And unlike Roy Harris, he never wrote one perfect work in which he said all that he had to say. But he was somehow more than the sum of his music: he achieved greatness of spirit. He shied away from the Easterners' sometimes joyless determination to define a single American language, to speak to a single mass audience. He preferred to engage in a hundred separate musical conversations. The magic of his work always comes in unexpected juxtapositions—Indian percussion and Irish folk tunes, shape-note hymns and Bachian polyphony, melody and noise. For him, composing became a way of listening to the world. ♦

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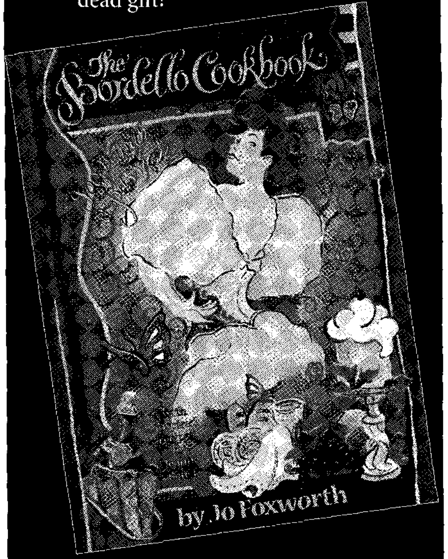

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SHOUTS & MURMURS

CARD WIRED

BY DAVID SEDARIS

Now even the greeting card industry is getting in on the mass-therapy act [by designing cards] for people who have something delicate to communicate to their partner but somehow cannot find the words—or, more likely, the courage—to say it out loud. Buy enough of these cards and you could virtually hold an entire conversation with your loved one (or not) without opening your mouth.—*The Independent.*

MAY-SEPTEMBER ROMANCE / IMPOTENCE

To a young Valentine from a venerable husband:
Think of me as a fine champagne, my love,
The grapes crushed long before you were even born.
Here's hoping that my impressive label will hold your interest
Until I find the strength
To pop my cork.

LOCKSMITHS / VANS AND DRINKING

Good morning, Valentine!

When you lost your job as a locksmith, I'm afraid I wasn't very understanding. I was wrong, asking you to use your talents to break into my stepmother's van. Call me sentimental, but I'll arrange for your bail as soon as possible. And I'm looking forward to spending a quiet afternoon, just the two of us, with the six-pack we found in my stepmother's van.

GENDER CONFUSION

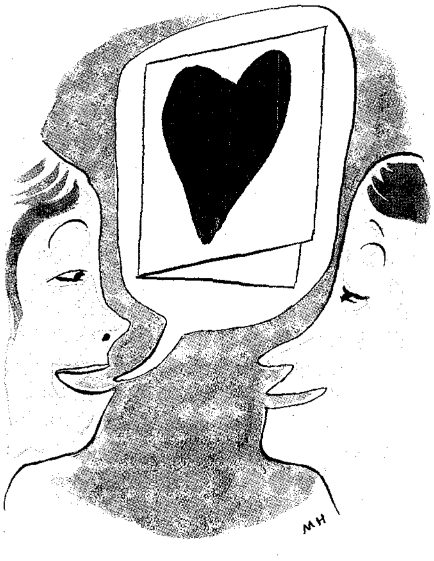
On our first date, you told me that you used to be a woman,
And I chuckled to myself, not knowing
That you didn't know
I used to be a man.
Funny, Valentine, that after all these years
We still can't use a public restroom
Without laughing.

PUBLIC DISGRACE / CHINCHILLAS

When I first told you I planned to resign as Lieutenant Governor,
You turned your head,
And I caught the ghost of your perfume.
I'm praying that, come Valentine's Day,
You might agree to leave the house
And visit me here at the treatment center,
Where we can hold hands and discuss my plans
To open a chinchilla ranch.

FORMER SPOUSE / STRESS / STANDUP COMEDY

Thank you, Valentine,
For understanding my need to maintain a casual sexual relationship
With my former wife,
And for replacing the battery in my Taurus on that cold, rainy day
When I felt too stressed out.
I appreciate the way you stood by my side during my standup comedy "phase,"
And I give you my word:



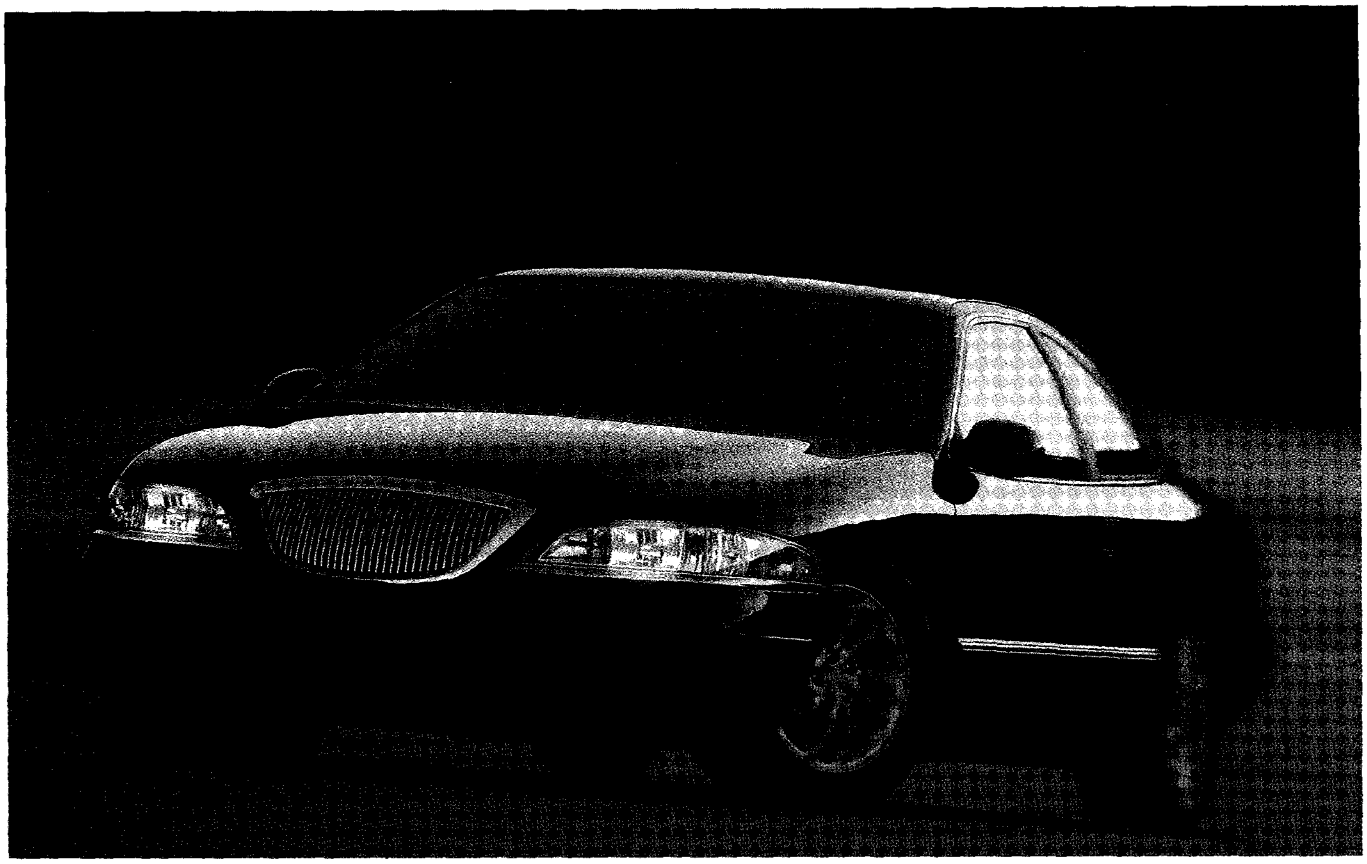
I'll never again publicly read from your dream journal.
(Though it *is* quite funny!)
I'm not sure why I'm apologizing.
Maybe it's just my way of saying
I still care.

DIVORCE / TICKET-STUB COLLECTORS

This will be our last Valentine's Day together
So let's make the most of it, shall we?
Oh, I think we can forgo
Chocolate candies and aromatic bouquets,
Candlelit dinners and walks in the rain.
We made a mistake. I did, anyway.
I've got a feeling that St. Patrick's Day will find us in the company of other, finer lovers.
Me with Josie Tomchuck
And you . . . who can say?
Let's take this day to pack your things and call the movers.
Who knows?
Maybe while dividing our collection of ticket stubs
We'll brush shoulders
And exchange a bittersweet smile.

PUNCTURE WOUNDS

I'm sorry about the puncture wound.
What started off as play became what I'm hoping the courts will define as "roughhousing."
I know you need a new kidney.
Under different circumstances,
I'd really love to help.
Perhaps this Valentine's Day we can sit quietly for a change.
Maybe you can redraft your will
And withdraw the charges.
Friends? ♦



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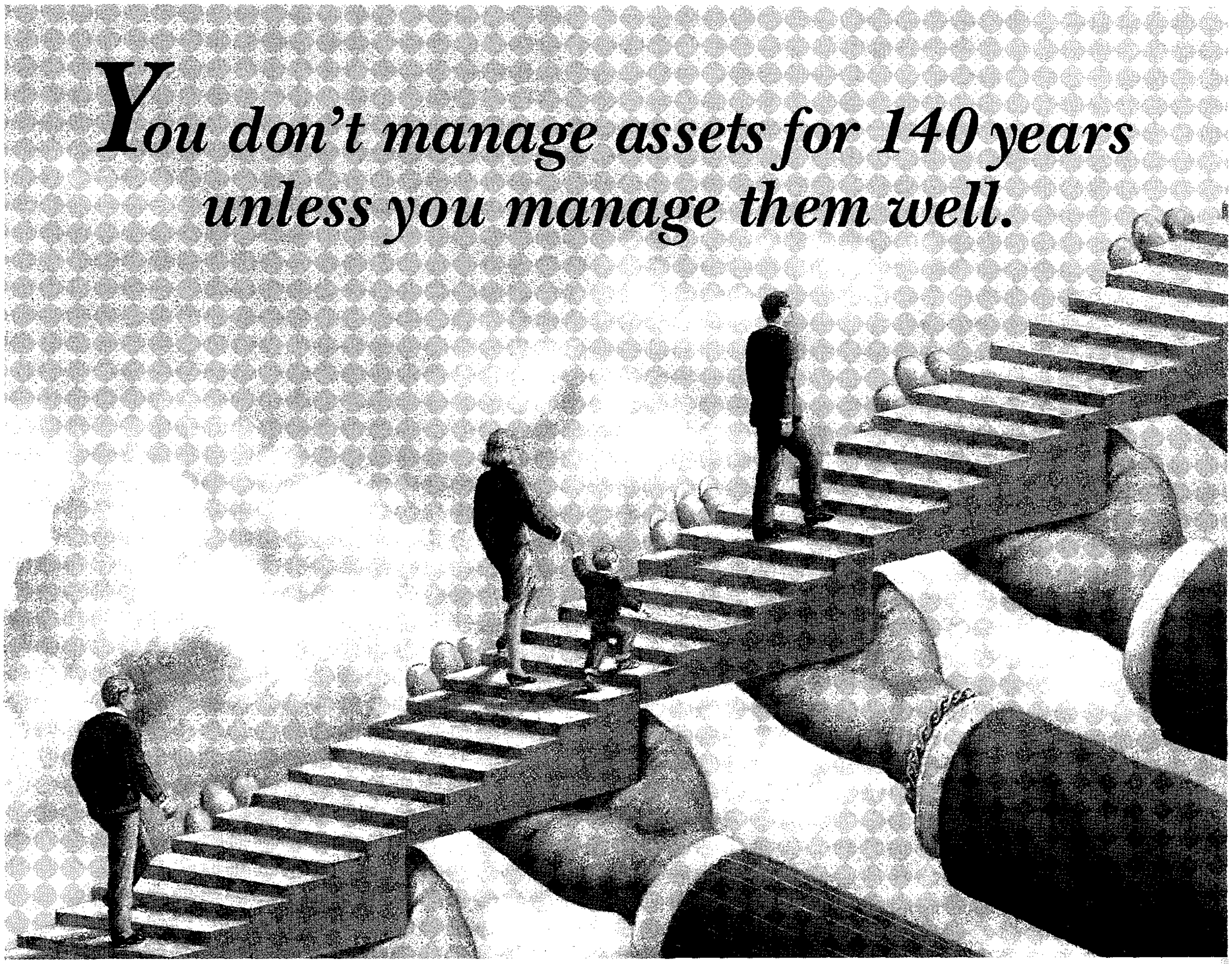
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